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Standard's settings 'need to be realistic'

Used-imports sector to suggest rethink of penalties and offering scrappage credits as part of overhaul

Officials are being urged to ensure new targets for the clean vehicle standard (CVS) are realistic and achievable as industry organisations prepare for discussions on revamping the scheme over coming months.

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) has welcomed the coalition recognising used cars need to be treated differently from new imports under a rejigged standard.

The government has confirmed it will retain the scheme, and work will soon start on new targets and settings due to take effect from January 2028.

In addition, different carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions targets for used vehicles crossing the border will be established.

The first stage of the review established the CVS as the most cost-effective mechanism to boost imports of lower-emissions models and that canning the scheme would cause problems for the industry.

There will be different emissions targets for new and used imports from 2028

Officials are expected to start talks with stakeholders next month and aim to report back to the government by the end of April next year.

Greig Epps, VIA's chief executive, told Autofile the association has no set numbers in mind at this stage for the new targets because several factors need to be considered.

"We need to sit down with officials and look at what's out there, what people need and want, and the price range of those vehicles," he explains.

"From there we can establish a number and decide what might be a reasonable progression from that for subsequent targets.

"When it comes to setting targets, they have to be numbers that recognise the existing supply

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Making foundation for future market

The rental sector is shifting from resilience to long-term capability, says James Dalglish

JAMES DALGLISH
Acting CEO, Rental Vehicle Association NZ

As international tourism recovers, the rental vehicle sector is shifting its focus to long-term capability.

The rental industry has spent the better part of five years adapting to disruption and challenges have evolved over time.

First came the Covid-19 pandemic and closures of our border. These were followed by supply-chain disruptions, vehicle shortages, inflationary pressures and rising operating costs.

For many operators, simply maintaining fleets and meeting customer demand became increasingly complex.

Today, however, the industry is entering a different phase. International visitor arrivals are continuing their recovery and are now approaching pre-Covid levels.

That recovery is flowing through the tourism ecosystem and providing greater confidence for rental operators as they make plans for the future. While challenges remain, the conversation is shifting from resilience to optimisation.

The past few years have reinforced the importance of strong systems, clear processes and disciplined decision-making.

Many operators have responded by improving fleet management practices, embracing digital tools and refining the way they operate. Changes initially made out of necessity are now delivering lasting benefits and creating stronger, more resilient businesses.

One area where this is particularly evident is decarbonisation and the rental sector has already made meaningful progress.

Our members now operate around 25 per cent of their combined fleets under the clean vehicle standard, comprising around 23.5 per cent hybrid vehicles and 1.5 per cent battery electric vehicles.

Those figures demonstrate that the transition towards lower-emissions transport is already under way. At the same time, operators continue to experience the practical realities of fleet transition. While hybrids have achieved strong uptake, a wholesale shift to fully electric fleets still remains distant.

Customer demand, charging infrastructure, vehicle availability and operating economics all continue to influence fleet purchasing decisions.

The path to decarbonisation is unlikely to be defined by a sudden switch. More realistically, it will be a gradual evolution as technology matures, infrastructure expands and market conditions align.

The rental vehicle sector has showed remarkable adaptability over recent years. Having navigated unprecedented disruption, operators are now in a stronger position to focus on efficiency, customer outcomes and long-term sustainability.

The challenges have not disappeared, but the outlook is brighter. If the past five years were about resilience, the next five may be about capability – building stronger businesses, embracing innovation and continuing towards a lower-emissions future.

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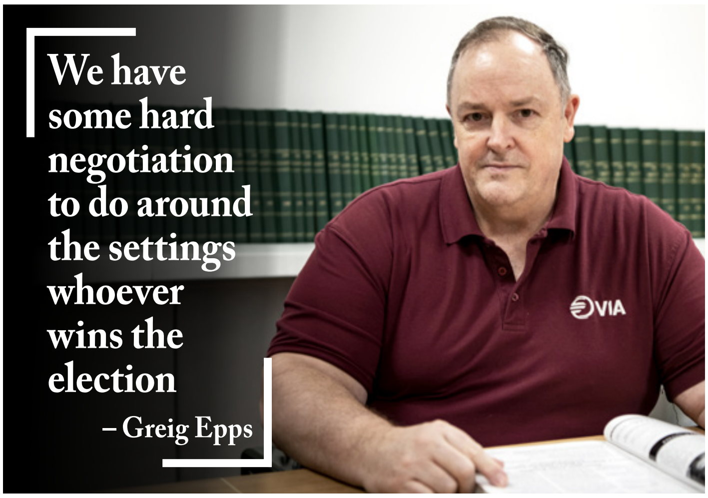
chain and push from there. If we're importing vehicles with an average of 135gCO2/km now, then what does 'better' look like?

"The starting point needs to be realistic and improve from that rather than being crazy low and unachievable, which will only lead to us quibbling over how bad we're going to fail. That doesn't help anyone.

"We haven't come up with a starting number yet. We hope the officials are doing some more nuanced work around trying to figure out how to come up with a target and not just looking at numbers on a spreadsheet."

Latest figures from the NZTA show used light-vehicle imports averaged 135gCO2/km in the first seven months of this year against an average target of 110g over the same period. For new imports, the year-to-date average was 143gCO2/km compared with an average goal of 139g.

The combined emissions figure for new and used light vehicles



was 140gCO2/km versus a target of 127g.

Epps notes that as officials determine future targets for vehicles they will also need to consider at what level credits and penalties apply.

The CVS was developed to allow importers to generate credits to offset penalties that they accumulated and was meant to be "fairly neutral". However, VIA states 70 per cent of used vehicles imported in 2025 were penalised.

"After the clean car discount's removal, EVs were hard to sell until we hit this year's fuel crisis, and for used-vehicle importers they were also hard to find and difficult to ship," adds Epps.

"We saw the new-car sector was able to accumulate a couple of million credits because on that side of the market EVs were coming in. But on our side, at the start of this year we had about 300,000 credits. If the policy is meant to balance credits and penalties, that's a clear sign it isn't working."

He hopes talks will focus on other ways for importers to accrue credits as VIA plans to raise the idea of a scrappage credit scheme to accelerate reducing the fleet's age and emissions profile.

"An issue with the original policy was we didn't have a way of balancing out penalties and credits, so part of these discussions will need to be on how we create credits.

"It may be built into a set target or the sorts of vehicles classified, but we also have some ideas around other ways to look across the fleet and fleet-management approach to generate credits.

"Used imports are helping to optimise the existing fleet. It's more likely a used import pushes a car out of the other end of the fleet than a new one coming in.

"So how do we successfully pull vehicles from the fleet and is that an area where we can create credits and credit the industry for taking steps to shift a vehicle out?"

Epps adds such an approach would reward businesses for the verified permanent removal of older vehicles and might fit into how the revamped CVS for used imports works.

"If we look at what's coming in at the front end and tick a box, we may have done well there," he says. "But as we saw in 2025, used-import volumes were in the mid-70,000s and down 30 per cent from historical levels, and the fleet's age went up.

"We're not replacing those older vehicles and still have about 20 per cent of the fleet older than 20 years old. We need to look at how we shift vehicles out.

"VIA has gathered a lot of data and analysis about the fleet over the past year or so. That means we can go into conversations with officials with some ideas and thoughts early on rather than it being a completely fresh start."

The association would have preferred the used-imports sector to be excluded from the CVS, but Epps describes the government treating it differently from the new-vehicle market as an "important acknowledgement" of a problem that's been raised consistently.

New and used are "essentially different products", which means the CVS has been one policy regulating two separate markets.

Epps says the coalition's decision creates an opportunity to design a system that better reflects market realities and VIA is now eager to see what the stage-two design process will lead to.

"The product mix and type of vehicles being imported meant one policy across all of them wasn't working and was creating differences. This next phase is going to be important because it will be saying what does separate mean.

"We want to ensure the conversation will look at the characteristics of the used market, what's out there, what consumers want, what's affordable and how we make a workable system that gives us certainty into the future and meets whatever goal the government is trying to achieve.

"From that, we can understand the shape of the market and start

The government says the current CVS settings aren't well-matched to market conditions

putting some pressure onto it.

"Even within that system, we might still need weight adjustment and be open to asking, is that something we still require in a used-only policy?"

The general election on November 7 will take place while talks on the future of the CVS are under way, but Epps is optimistic if there is a change of government, the incoming one will continue with a two-stream approach.

"I don't think any political party is pushing back on the idea of a dual-market system and it will really come down to what the settings are. We have some hard negotiation to do around those settings whoever wins the election."

He hopes the revamped regulations will be rubber-stamped by about the middle of next year, which will give the industry time to understand what the CVS will look like from 2028.

The sector is also hoping the talks result in a period of stability after frequent adjustments of emissions targets and penalty settings since the scheme was launched in January 2023.

"It's a tight timeframe but we're not starting fresh with no knowledge about what we think will work," adds Epps. "Those initial conversations in October should get off to a good start.

"Ultimately, from January 1, 2028, we want some certainty for a good period into the future. From there, the industry can carry on and try to hit those targets. We also need to be aiming for longer-term outcomes rather than putting a lot of short-term pain on the industry and creating uncertainty.

"The idea is we continue to improve the fleet with every vehicle rather than letting perfection be the enemy of improvement."

SCHEME 'WELL-ESTABLISHED'

The government announced on August 25 it will retain the CVS and Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport, says it "became clear" last year that its settings weren't well-matched to market conditions.

"Most importers were struggling to meet the passenger-vehicle targets with charges likely to be passed to consumers through higher prices and reduced choice," he adds.

"At that time, the government made critical short-term changes to ease pressure on importers and keep cars affordable for families and businesses. We also committed to complete a full first-principles review of the standard."

Stage one of that review was completed earlier this year. It found the CVS to be the most cost-effective way to increase the availability of lower-emissions models in this country and most industry stakeholders taking part in it supported keeping the scheme.

Bishop notes in feedback on the review that the car industry stated the standard is well-established with importers accumulating credits and charges over time. Removing it at this stage would be "highly disruptive" for the industry.

"The government has decided to retain a standard and progress work to calibrate the settings so they are realistic and achievable for industry. It has also agreed to set different targets for used imports to reflect they have different and older technology."

DRIVING EMISSIONS LOWER

The Motor Industry Association (MIA) has welcomed retaining the CVS and plans for work on recalibrating its settings to better reflect New Zealand's market.

Chief executive Aimee Wiley describes last month's decision as an "important step" towards establishing a more durable and effective vehicle-emissions framework.

"The MIA has consistently supported retaining a regulated CVS while arguing strongly its settings need to reflect the realities of vehicles motorists can afford, want and need.

"This decision responds directly to issues the MIA and our members raised through the stage-one review. We acknowledge the government and officials for engaging seriously with the data, evidence and industry expertise provided."

As a small, fully import-dependent market, vehicle technology and product availability in New Zealand are largely determined by global manufacturing, product planning and allocation decisions.

Wiley says this makes it important for future CVS settings to recognise the technology available when a vehicle is made and different characteristics of supply across our market.

"A new-vehicle distributor sourcing current global production and a used importer sourcing vehicles manufactured for overseas markets several years earlier don't have access to the same vehicles or technology pool," she explains.

"The same principle applies across vehicle segments. Technology availability, consumer requirements and the pace of transition aren't uniform across the

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Aimee Wiley, of the MIA

James McDowall, of the MTA

Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport

market. Good regulation needs to recognise those realities while continuing to drive measurable and durable improvement in vehicle emissions."

The MIA believes the government's focus on achievable settings provides a sound basis for work that reduces CO2 emissions and motoring costs while maintaining model availability, affordability and choice.

"This isn't about stepping away from lower emissions," says Wiley. "It's about getting the settings right so the standard can deliver sustained emissions reduction in the real world.

"Kiwis deserve access to the best and safest technology, and to the lowest emissions and most energy-efficient vehicles they can afford."

The association will now turn its attention to the next phase of helping shape a durable and evidence-led CVS that works.

Wiley adds the MIA's objective remains a scheme that supports sustained emissions reduction while maintaining choice, affordability, availability and renewal of the fleet.

KEY 'POLICY LEVER'

The Motor Trade Association (MTA) describes keeping the CVS for new and used imports as the right decision and, like other industry organisations, it adds the next step must be to make the targets achievable.

James McDowall, head of advocacy, says it was pleased to be part of the review's first stage and government officials have acknowledged members' input helped inform the decisions cabinet reached.

"We have long argued it would be remiss not to have a standard," he adds. "It remains the last policy lever we have to influence vehicle CO2 emissions.

"It stops New Zealand becoming a destination for less fuel-efficient, higher-emissions vehicles that cost more to run.

"Retaining the standard for new and used imports keeps that lever in place."

The MTA says it had called for what stage two of the review will consider, which is whether the CO2 targets cut emissions and motoring costs faster while remaining achievable for the industry as well as maintaining vehicle availability, affordability and consumer choice.

McDowall emphasises: "Achievability and certainty for the industry are now central to the next phase of work, which is what we asked for."

The MTA had argued that used imports don't need to be treated differently under the CVS, but cabinet has decided to establish separate CO2 targets for this sector.

"We will be engaging with officials to ensure any separate targets are grounded in market realities, don't disadvantage the used-import channel, and continue to protect affordability and choice for motorists," adds McDowall.

"To date the standard has succeeded in shifting the vehicle mix towards hybrids. The test now is whether the next set of targets stays realistic."

On board with agency

Chris Bishop, the Minister of Transport, says the new structure of the NZTA's board means it has the expertise to deliver.

David Smol

David Smol has been reappointed for a two-year term, while Lana Stockman, Steve Haszard and Murdo Beattie are on three-year terms.

Bishop says: "David Smol's regulatory, governance and public-sector experience will continue to provide valuable oversight to the board.

"Lana Stockman brings a diverse background across finance, engineering, psychology and regulation. Her understanding of commercial and investment trade-offs for regulators and operators will strengthen the board's capability."

As for Haszard, he is a "commercially astute board member and executive leader with strong regulatory experience. His experience leading organisations through change, including as chief executive of WorkSafe and managing partner of Meredith Connell, will be valuable".

Bishop adds: "Murdo Beattie brings deep commercial and investment management experience, including in complex infrastructure and transport-related transactions.

"His leadership on significant transactions, including the recapitalisation of Air NZ and the crown's reacquisition of KiwiRail, will add strong commercial expertise to the NZTA's governance."

Bishop has acknowledged Catherine Taylor, who is retiring.

"She has made substantial contributions to the board's governance and oversight of the NZTA. Catherine's leadership as chair of the regulatory sub-committee has been valuable in supporting the board's responsibilities."

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With a strong background in automotive finance, James has helped customers navigate the finance process from start to finish. He has experience working with a range of New Zealand lenders and finance providers, helping customers find finance options that suit their individual needs and circumstances.

For James, finance isn't just about numbers and getting an approval. It's about understanding the person behind the application. He enjoys getting to know his customers, listening to what they're looking to achieve and making the finance process as simple and stress-free as possible. He believes in being open, approachable and transparent, so customers can feel comfortable and confident throughout the process.

His years of experience in sales and management have also helped James develop strong communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills. Whether he's working with a first-time buyer or someone who has been through the finance process many times before, James always aims to provide the same friendly and professional experience.

Outside of work, James enjoys keeping active and spending time at the gym. He's also a keen fisherman and loves travelling and experiencing new places whenever he gets the chance. When he's not working, you'll usually find him catching up with his partner, family and friends, enjoying good food and simply making the most of his time with the people who matter to him.

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Dealership begins new era

The Motor Company at Moorhouse Avenue, Christchurch

A used-car business has been given a new name and looks after nearly 28 years, but customers visiting the Christchurch dealership will still encounter plenty of familiar faces despite the change of ownership.

The Paul Kelly Motor Company has been bought by Dan Chima, Yuri Van Toor and Darren Griffith, who also run Ute Nation and Southern Specialist Cars in the city. They have rebranded it as The Motor Company.

The takeover deal includes a sales site on Moorhouse Avenue and the former PK Auto Services in Stevens Street, which has been renamed The Motor Company Service Centre.

Chima is excited to complete the purchase and a key aspect of the transaction was retaining the previous staff of about 20, some of whom have decades of involvement with the business.

He told Autofile: "It's been a longstanding business in Christchurch and has got a great reputation, but more importantly there's a huge amount of respect for the team.

"A lot of them have been with Paul Kelly for 10 or 20-plus years. They have a lot of experience and knowledge that can't be replaced very easily. The people we've taken on with the business are a key part of why we decided to do it.

"We took on every employee from that company as well as having employees from our own businesses. We are actively hiring at the moment and have about 10 positions we'd like to fill as we look to expand.

"We had a pretty long consultation period with the staff leading into the changeover to allay any fears they might have had, and we let them understand who we were and what we wanted to do to make them part of the journey.

"There's a huge responsibility on us to lead this team for the next 20 years and we don't take that lightly at all."

Chima describes the sales site as "great" and hails the Stevens Street service centre as "probably one of the best workshop facilities in Christchurch, franchised or non-franchised".

He adds the fit-out of the service building, which has more than 25 vehicle bays, and the way it operates were major factors in deciding to purchase the operations from Kelly.

"It helps us with our existing businesses, Southern Specialist Cars and Ute Nation, and improves our offering to clients by having that proper retail-focused workshop facility, which we didn't have until now.

"Meanwhile, the target market of The Motor Company, as it was for Paul Kelly's business, is cars between $10,000 and $40,000.

"This wasn't a segment we were operating in with our other two businesses so it's a nice fit and captures a different part of the market for us.

"We've had a busy start as owners and have already identified some great synergies between that business and our existing businesses, and we're really happy."

Chima says The Motor Company has ambitions to expand its number of sites and is looking for future opportunities in the used-car space.

"I don't see us changing the target market of those $10,000 to $40,000 used cars, but I think there's room for the company to double its footprint and double its stock holding in the short-to-medium term.

"We're Christchurch-based so Christchurch is our priority, but we ▶

From left, Paul Kelly completes the deal to sell his company to Dan Chima, Yuri Van Toor and Darren Griffith

will be looking at opportunities as and when they come up. We're not going to limit ourselves."

'RIGHT OPPORTUNITY'

The Paul Kelly Motor Company was established in 1998 with three staff and grew over the years to become well-recognised across Canterbury.

Kelly has sold about 70,000 cars over the years and is proud his company was never involved in any dispute tribunals.

"We've looked after our clients and staff," he told Autofile. "I don't know if anybody in the past 25 years would have created anything like the volume we did and the profitability of how good that business was over the years.

"It hasn't been just a job for me, it's been a career. I always ran the business not so much standing there selling cars but looking at it from the outside as a customer.

"From the word go, I wanted to run it like a Harvey Norman or a big local store and not just a used-car yard. I think that was the biggest advantage I had."

He launched the company with the support of his then-business partner Andrew Simms, who is now managing director of Andrew Simms Newmarket, before buying him out within 12 months.

Kelly says the early success of his business was helped by a special pricing plan with all the vehicles priced at $9,990 during the first month.

"I made more money in that first month than I made in all of the previous year," he smiles.

"I was so excited because I was making money and we could barely keep up with demand.

"A lot of people would have stopped at that but I wondered if I could make twice that. I just worked and worked and achieved some great things.

"I kept buying more cars and kept going, but I think the proudest thing for me is what we achieved with people over the years."

The business has had consistently low staff turnover and some employees have been there more than two decades. Kelly was always keen to foster a good culture and working environment.

"We've got people who have worked for me for a long time and I know they have done well for themselves over the years by being part of a successful group.

"I'm very much for getting people into work and giving them an opportunity. They work hard and they will be well looked after.

"I'm proud of everything we have achieved and it wasn't just about me. It was the guys preparing the cars right, buying them right, delivering them and being professional. I was just the guy who had to steer the team in the right direction, and ensure we had good morals and standards."

One of the most-reported-on perks for Kelly's employees came in 2018 when he took all his staff to Las Vegas to mark the company's 20th anniversary.

The trip for almost 50 people was not incentive-based and involved everyone at the business, including someone who had only joined a few weeks earlier.

The company also shared a percentage of its profits each year equally with everyone on the payroll, people reaching 10 years of service received $10,000 and it closed annually for staff to have a special day out.

Kelly, 56, decided to sell the business because he saw no long-term future for it within his family.

"I started the company quite young and had children a bit later in life so my children are too young to take the business over – my oldest son is 13.

"I held on to it through the years until I found the right opportunity and right people to own it because that was more important to me than what I got paid for it.

"It was all about the actual owner and how they would look after the people working there and, so far, all I've seen is really good. Everybody kept their job and Dan will need to hire more people.

"My name has come off the door, his name's on it, the new logos look good and Dan has hit the ground running.

"He should be pretty rapt to purchase it because it's probably the largest branded used-car business in the South Island. He has also got some seriously good people and processes. It's just a great outcome for everybody."

Kelly, who has a private car collection of about 20 vehicles, is stepping away entirely from the automotive sector. He plans to focus his efforts on growing the commercial, retail, office and industrial property business he has been running in the background up until now.

"That's me done with the motor industry, I've got enough cars at home," he says. "There's several millions of dollars' worth sat at home and I'll probably now have more time to enjoy them.

"I've got plenty on with my other business, so it's not like I'm going to be doing nothing.

"I'm also off to run my old Pontiac Trans Am at the Bathurst 1000 Touring Car Masters this year and stuff like that."

The Motor Company Service Centre in Waltham

Takeover deadline extended

The closing date for the buy-out of 2 Cheap Cars (2CC) has been pushed back by about four weeks to September 23.

Sena & Co Ltd, which is owned by David Sena, co-founder and chief executive of the target company, has offered 80 cents for each ordinary share it doesn't hold.

Sena's company wrote to shareholders on August 10 notifying them the final date for acceptances had been extended from August 23 to September 23.

The letter states: "The minimum acceptance condition will be satisfied once we receive acceptances which will result in Sena & Co holding or controlling 90 per cent or more of voting rights in 2CC, unless waived in accordance with the terms of the offer.

"If the 90 per cent threshold is not reached and the condition isn't waived, the offer will lapse.

"Shareholders will then not receive their cash consideration of $0.80 per share and the stock will likely trade down towards or below the pre-announcement price of $0.66.

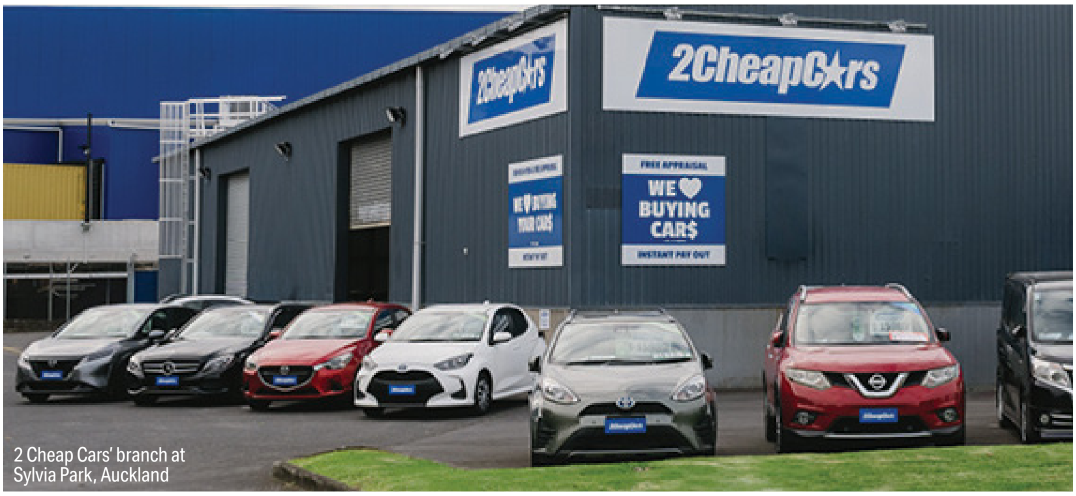
"Shareholders are encouraged to accept the offer as soon as possible to help ensure the offer can proceed to completion and receive their cash promptly once the offer conditions are satisfied."

The letter notes the offer period may be further extended in accordance with the Takeovers Code. It urges those who have yet to accept to read the offer document and target company statement.

Sena & Co adds they should consider a series of points when making their decisions, such as the independent directors unanimously recommending the offer be accepted.

It says the offer price is within the valuation range stated in the independent adviser's report, which is included in the target company statement.

The price of 80c per share includes a 21 per cent premium on the closing NZX price of 66c on July 9, the last trading day before the takeover notice was lodged, and 39 per cent to the 12-month volume-weighted average price of 58c.



2 Cheap Cars' branch at Sylvia Park, Auckland

As 2 Cheap Cars noted in an announcement to the NZX early last month, trading up to July 27 was weaker than in the current financial year's first quarter, and conditions remain volatile. Other points raised in the letter include:

- Trading in the company's shares is illiquid and the offer presents a chance to sell for all-cash consideration.
- The independent directors advised on July 27 that up until July 23 no competing proposal had emerged.
- 2 Cheap Cars' share price will probably fall towards or below its pre-offer level should the takeover fail.

Trading conditions remain volatile
– Michael Stiassny

The letter adds: "If you have not already accepted the offer in respect of your shares, but wish to do so, please complete and return the acceptance form. If you have already accepted the offer, you don't need to take any further action."

UPDATES ON TRADING

2 Cheap Cars has issued two reports on its results since the takeover bid was announced with the first lodged with the NZX on August 4.

That stated net profit after tax (NPAT) for June came in at about $500,000, although trading has since been "weaker".

In addition to NPAT of about $600,000 in each of April and May, total profit was around $1.7 million for 2026/27's first quarter.

"The company wouldn't ordinarily provide an update based on a single month's performance," says chairman Michael Stiassny. "It's providing it in the context of being subject to a takeover offer and to keep shareholders updated.

"The board cautions the results for any individual month or short period do not provide a reliable basis from which to extrapolate performance for the remainder of the financial year. Trading conditions remain volatile and the company isn't providing financial-year 2027 earnings guidance."

That update was made before 2 Cheap Cars' July accounts were finalised. "However, as noted in the independent adviser's report released, trading in July to the date of that report had been weaker than the first quarter," adds Stiassny.

The company issued another update on August 14, which showed NPAT in July was about $320,000 to take the unaudited total for the first four months of the 2027 financial year to $1.99m.

Stiassny says that month's result was consistent with the August 4 update that trading had become softer, primarily reflecting reduced sales volumes and average margins.

RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS

Amid the news of Sena's takeover bid, the company opened a new branch in Henderson, west Auckland, at the start of July.

The dealership is intended to replace 2 Cheap Cars' operation in Penrose, which is closing in September with the landlord planning to redevelop the site.

"The replacement of Penrose had been contemplated in the company's planning and the Henderson opening doesn't represent a planned net increase in retail footprint," says Stiassny.

"Additional capacity remains available at the Sylvia Park site and the company believes its footprint is appropriately aligned with current operational output.

"The company will continue to review its retail footprint having regard to market conditions, operational capacity and expected returns."

Scheme to boost charging network

The coalition, which has pledged to deliver 10,000 public EV chargers by 2030, has opened the second round of zero-interest loans to encourage private-sector investment.

Crown-owned National Infrastructure Funding and Financing Ltd released a request for proposals for the latest round of concessionary lending on August 10.

About $21 million is being made available to charge-point operators seeking co-investment to deliver charging sites.

Applications will be assessed via an open procurement process focused on delivering the best value for money and strongest contribution to expanding the public network.

Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport, says: "Many Kiwis are interested in making the switch to cut fuel costs or their carbon footprints, but we continue to hear concerns about access to chargers, especially for longer journeys outside main centres.

"Before this government began addressing the issue, New Zealand had just over 1,800 public charge points, one of the lowest charger-to-EV ratios in the OECD.

"It's a chicken-and-egg situation. Companies are reluctant to invest in infrastructure until there are more EVs on the road, while many people are hesitant to buy an EV until they know charging will be readily available.

"That's why we are taking steps to unlock greater private investment, expand the network and give New Zealanders confidence to make the switch."

The second funding round builds on the first set of concessionary loans announced

A ChargeNet rapid charger

in March, which will deliver 2,574 charge points via partnerships with ChargeNet and Meridian Energy.

The finance can fund up to 50 per cent of a project's capital costs, has zero per cent interest and boasts a maximum tenure of 12 years.

Bishop says round one showed strong market demand for the programme and that concessionary lending can unlock major private-sector investment.

"Projects under way will more than double the public network and represent a major step towards achieving our long-term goals," he adds. "By 2030, our target is to have 10,000 charge points across the country, providing roughly one charger for every 40 EVs."

In addition to putting "downward pressure on power bills", the coalition is developing minimum standards for EV chargers so people can choose ones that will automatically charge overnight when power is cheapest.

It is allowing rooftop solar installation on existing buildings without a building consent, which has seen such connections climb by 19 per cent in the past year, and is doubling the limit for households exporting power back to the grid to 10kW.

Support for policy add-ons

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) says a regulator's report shouldn't be taken as saying insurance products sold by car dealers are fundamentally wrong.

It supports the Financial Markets Authority (FMA) aiming to ensure consumers are treated fairly when signing up for insurance and other financial products when buying a vehicle.

The regulator has raised questions about how some policies are sold, how well people understand what they are buying and the oversight insurers provide when products are distributed through third parties.

VIA's view is such issues need to be taken seriously, but dealer-sold policies must not be labelled inappropriately and consumers shouldn't be prevented from taking out protection at point of sale.

"A car is essential for many New Zealanders," says Greig Epps, the association's chief executive.

"Products such as mechanical breakdown and credit insurance can protect people from being faced with significant, unexpected repair bills when already servicing a vehicle loan."

He contends the right regulatory outcome isn't to make such products harder to obtain. When there's evidence of inappropriate sales practices, inadequate disclosure, poor training or problematic remuneration, such matters need to be tackled directly and proportionately.

Epps adds: "People commonly arrange the vehicle, finance and insurance at the same time.

"There's nothing wrong with that if customers understand what they're being offered, know the product is optional, understand the benefits, limitations and exclusions, and are making a genuine choice."

Insurers need robust systems to ensure consumers are treated fairly
– Michael Hewes

He says paying for them through a car loan also means consumers can access cover they might not otherwise afford upfront without taking out extra finance.

"Insurers commonly offer significant discounts on policies written for more than 12 months, which is a saving generally only available when cover is arranged at the outset.

"None of this diminishes the need for good conduct at the point of sale. Dealers must make sufficient enquiry to ensure products meet customers' needs, they are fit for purpose and can be purchased affordably.

"When that standard is met, this model is often the most practical and cost-effective way to get appropriate cover.

"We would be concerned if isolated examples of poor conduct were used to justify broad regulation that imposes significant cost on responsible businesses or reduces access to products."

While the FMA has singled out intermediary oversight, training and sales processes as areas for improvement, Epps says "practical issues" can be addressed without assuming the whole model needs dismantling.

As for the regulator, its report highlights while products address relatively small and specialised markets, "they share common characteristics including complex features, and significant exclusions and limitations".

Michael Hewes, director of credit, deposit-taking, insurance and advice, says insurers cannot outsource responsibility for fair consumer outcomes.

He adds: "When products are sold through intermediaries, insurers still need robust systems, controls and monitoring to ensure consumers are treated fairly.

"We have seen a recurring gap between policies, systems and controls insurers described, and how they operated in practice.

"New Zealanders should be supported to make informed decisions about products they purchase and have confidence they are likely to meet their needs."

The FMA says its review identified four key areas of concern. Sales practices and distribution arrangements may not consistently support informed customers' decision-making.

Consumers may purchase products that fail to consistently meet their needs, objectives or expectations and without fully understanding them. In addition, insurers aren't consistently identifying and responding to emerging conduct risks.

Distribution oversight is where "industry uplift is most needed". Insurers outlined onboarding and training for intermediaries, but the review found limited evidence of monitoring and oversight proportionate to risks associated with commission-based and intermediated sales.

The regulator adds insurers have acted to embed Conduct of Financial Institutions requirements with some companies showing mature approaches to governance and complaints management, and using product performance data to improve consumer outcomes.

The FMA has provided targeted feedback to insurers. It now expects the sector to consider its findings and assess whether similar issues exist in their operations.

Focus on dealers

Mark Greenfield, who has more than 25 years' experience in the car industry, has become head of sales – auto at Avanti Finance.

His appointment builds on a strong track record in business development, sales and leadership, including more than a decade with Motorcentral Technologies, which is part of the Avanti group of companies.

Most recently, as head of business development, Greenfield helped grow the business by strengthening relationships and expanding its development focus.

In his new role, he will lead sales for Avanti Finance Auto and Motorcentral, focusing on partner relationships, growth and delivering solutions to make doing business with the company easier.

"Every dealer has a different view of what success looks like at any given time," says Greenfield. "My focus is on listening, asking the right questions and understanding where Avanti can add real value not just through our products, but the way we partner with them."

Mark Greenfield

Lee Robson, general manager of auto, adds: "Mark has strong industry knowledge, commercial focus and a clear understanding of the market. His appointment brings experienced leadership and continuity to our auto sales team as we grow our introducer network across New Zealand."

Building trans-Tasman links

Organisers of an annual convention are hoping to increase engagement between dealers and automotive-related businesses in New Zealand and Australia.

This year's Australian Automotive Dealer Association (AADA) Convention and Expo attracted more than 1,000 delegates with issues such as changing customer expectations, margin pressure, new brands, electrification and the use of AI being tackled.

The two-day event, held at the International Convention Centre Sydney, brought together franchised new-car dealers, industry suppliers, automotive leaders and retail experts.

Patrick Tessier, convention director, says: "AADA was pleased to welcome 15 New Zealand-based attendees this year representing dealer businesses and allied industry organisations.

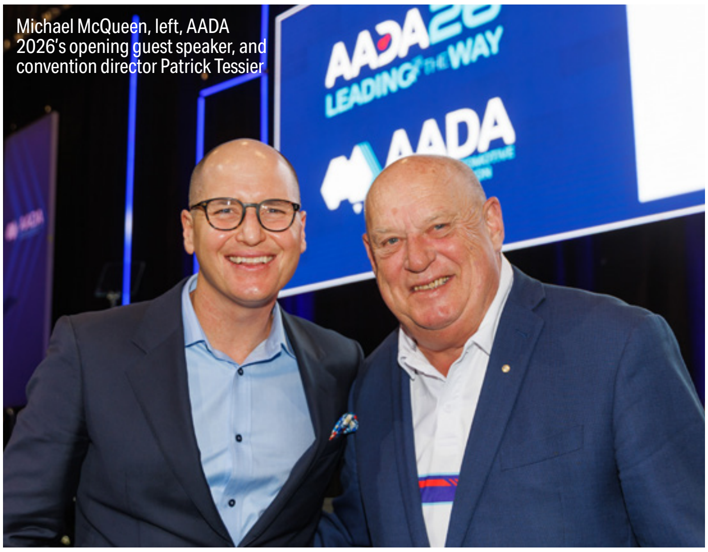
"Their attendance reinforced the growing relevance of the event for automotive retail businesses on both sides of the Tasman.

"While Australia and New Zealand operate in different regulatory and market environments, many of the commercial pressures facing dealers are increasingly similar."

A series of panel discussions, workshops and presentations were held at the event. Topics in the spotlight included marketing effectiveness, and the evolving relationship between dealers and manufacturers.

Tessier notes several sessions were particularly relevant for the New Zealand attendees, including a panel examining how international disruption, geopolitical risk, changing vehicle mix, EV growth, Chinese brands and policy pressures are affecting markets.

"The discussion reinforced that dealers in smaller, open markets such as Australia and New Zealand are exposed to many of the same global forces, even when the local settings differ."



Michael McQueen, left, AADA 2026's opening guest speaker, and convention director Patrick Tessier

The main-stage programme featured sessions on competing in high-tech, low-margin new-car markets and building stronger used-vehicle operations.

Others centred on improving customer retention through fixed operations, and understanding how AI, data and digital tools are changing dealership performance.

Meanwhile, workshops gave delegates access to practical sessions across operational, legal, commercial and technology topics.

These sessions covered the likes of cybersecurity, AI readiness, marketing return on investment, customer experience, used EVs, fixed operations, future mobility and dealership profitability.

The AADA Expo was a major part of the delegate experience with more than 70 exhibitors showcasing products, services and solutions for automotive retail, while the expo's live stage provided access to short presentations between meetings, exhibitor visits and networking.

Tessier says planning has begun for next year's AADA Convention & Expo, which will be held in Melbourne on July 21 and 22, and organisers see strong value in continued trans-Tasman engagement.

"The convention provides New Zealand dealers and allied industry professionals with an opportunity to benchmark against the larger Australian market, hear from local and international speakers, meet suppliers operating across both countries and compare how dealers are responding to shared commercial pressures," he explains.

"AADA thanks the New Zealand attendees who joined us in Sydney and looks forward to building on that participation in future years."

Buyers are using AI to build their shortlists before they contact a dealer
– Jono Wu

'VALUABLE INSIGHT'

Among this year's delegates from New Zealand was Jono Wu, marketing manager of Enterprise Motor Group and Community Financial Services (CFS).

He told Autofile the real value of attending for him wasn't discovering brands or new ideas but gaining validation for what's happening in New Zealand.

"Session after session, the pressures and priorities being talked about on stage were the exact things we've already got under way at CFS and Enterprise," he says.

"These include speed to lead, tightening up stock accuracy, being upfront with customers on trade-in values, and treating finance and protection as a proper conversation rather than an afterthought.

"It was genuinely reassuring to sit in a room full of Australian dealer principals and tech vendors and realise we're not behind the curve. A lot of what we're currently building and doing is exactly where the industry's heading."

Wu notes the event also provided insight into using AI to assist the customer journey without replacing any part of it.

"The research was consistent. Buyers are using AI to build their shortlists before they contact a dealer, but they still want a human for the actual decision.

"The real opportunity for us in New Zealand is using AI to enhance multiple touchpoints in between faster and smarter follow-ups, richer and more accurate vehicle information online, and automated reminders and check-ins through the ownership journey while ensuring a real person is still doing the reassuring and closing.

"That's directly applicable to how we handle leads, follow-ups and service communication across our branches."

How fast the industry is adapting to artificial intelligence and the growth of Chinese marques were topics that dominated activities over the two days.

Wu says brands such as BYD, GWM, Chery, Geely and Omoda Jaecoo are experiencing significant sales growth in Australia, while several established mainstream manufacturers are going backwards in a two-speed market.

"For us sitting in the used-car space, that raises a strategic question the whole sector needs to get ahead of. And that's at what point does the value proposition on a new Chinese vehicle start to outweigh buying used, given how aggressive their new pricing, warranties and tech are?

"What happens in three to five years' time when today's new Chinese cars start coming through as used stock? How does that reshape sourcing and residual values across the industry?"

Wu recommends anyone considering attending AADA's future conventions should go but make sure they have a specific problem they're trying to solve, rather than simply seeing what's out there.

"The content spans the whole dealership, sales, service, finance and marketing, so it's easy to leave with 40 good ideas and no clear priority. Pick your lens beforehand and filter everything through it.

"I'd also say don't skip the vendor floor. Some of the most useful practical details came from the tech and F&I providers."

The AADA Expo featured more than 70 exhibitors showcasing automotive retail products, services and solutions

James Hendry, AdTorque Edge's director of sales and operations, suggests delegates attending the AADA event should go in with a question they want answered, rather than simply rocking up to "see what's happening".

He notes the event offers a packed programme and people will get more out of it by selecting which sessions to attend based on something they're dealing with back home.

"Make sure you spend some proper time on the expo floor too rather than just sitting in sessions back-to-back because some of the best conversations happen around a stand and over networking drinks," he says.

"And if you can swing it, take a couple of people from your team so you can split up across sessions running at the same time and compare notes after. Nobody can cover it all solo."

Hendry adds AADA 2026 had a real buzz and dealers turned up wanting answers to the challenges and issues giving them headaches right now.

"I was lucky enough to see it from both sides, attending for the content as well as exhibiting with AdTorque. I'd sit in on the big main stage or workshop session, then head straight into, 'okay but what does this actually mean for my dealership?' conversations at the stand.

"The big takeaway for me was how upfront Aussie dealers are about margin compression right now. It's a genuinely tough, low-margin, high-tech market over there.

"That came through loud and clear in the Sovereign Insurance session with buyer behaviour shifting, new brands muscling in and pricing pressure everywhere. We're having that same conversation in New Zealand, just maybe a year or so behind."

Hendry says the used-car panel discussion also stood out because there's a shift towards treating used vehicles as a profit driver rather than something to deal with once a new-car sale is complete, "and that's something many New Zealand dealer groups could take a lot from".

Anneke Featonby, senior commercial lead at AutoPlay, was

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Drive for common car parts

The chairman of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) is urging its members to standardise vehicle components.

Koji Sato says doing so will save time and money to pump into better productivity, new technologies and advanced factories.

The envisioned list of "Japan standard" parts could even be expanded to cover those made by suppliers at home and overseas.

The efficiency drive is one of the most ambitious attempts yet to reshape the supply base spanning Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Subaru, Mazda, Mitsubishi and Suzuki.

"The most important theme facing the Japanese automotive industry is improving international competitiveness," says Sato, who is also Toyota Motor Corporation's chief executive officer. "We aim to strategically create areas of co-operation to improve efficiency.

"We have a strong sense of crisis the Japanese industry is in. Now is the time to further develop and evolve with the challenges and reform initiatives we must face."

Sato adds Japan must also improve efficiencies to free resources for its carmakers to invest in new technologies. For example, customers are no longer interested in multiple interior layouts. They want software interfaces, advanced driver-assist technology, faster-

Toyota's factory in Motomachi, Yokohama

charging batteries and powertrain options.

Standardising parts customers don't see allows carmakers to improve brand value in areas they do and enables them to fund multi-pathway approaches to offering different drivetrains.

Currently, suppliers make some 70,000 wire-harness variants to satisfy car companies' requirements, making large-scale automation difficult. If the industry can standardise basic architectures, suppliers can automate manual assembly.

While JAMA has yet to establish formal deadlines, it aims to make progress on standardising the first

We have a strong sense of crisis the Japanese industry is in

– Koji Sato

batch of components or materials within the next year or two.

Another of the seven challenges JAMA is focusing on is resources and components because Japan is trade-reliant when it comes to natural resources.

This is especially the case with rare-earth elements and lithium ores needed for electrified cars and their batteries, and the industry has to grapple with Chinese moves to limit exports of key rare-earth elements and semiconductors.

Silicon Valley and China have gained the upper hand in fully automated driving, so JAMA wants to build a better domestic infrastructure for developing and commercialising such technology, and for the Japanese government to set up a testing framework.

Spanning across different six categories, heavy domestic taxes applied to vehicles can amount to around $20,000 for an owner over the 13-year lifespan of a car costing about $32,900. The association says this stifles sales and the system needs overhauling.

The automotive industry in Japan needs to implement a multi-pathway approach to achieving carbon neutrality, and still faces pushback on some initiatives such as promoting hydrogen and carbon-neutral fuels.

To build a cleaner and more sustainable industry, JAMA's members require a cross-sector network for linking data and tracing components. Many experts believe that will be a massive undertaking given the international nature of supply chains.

The industry's future growth has become more linked to software and silicon, but Japanese carmakers still struggle to cultivate homegrown talent to create software-defined vehicles and have problems attracting overseas experts to the country.

Tackling this may well be essential to keep the country's brands front and centre on the global market.

[continued from page 15]

another of the Kiwi contingent at the Sydney event and describes it as eye-opening in terms of what may lie ahead for the industry.

"Some of the highlights for me were the products coming to market and how we might integrate with them to make things more streamlined for customers," she adds.

"The keynote speakers were strong, and it was valuable to see who was attending and gauge whether it would be worthwhile for us to be there again next year.

"Here in New Zealand, we hold around 80 per cent of the market whereas in Australia our footprint is much smaller, so we're keen to build more of a presence there and are growing our team accordingly.

"As we expand across Australia, getting our name out there matters so being at AADA next year is likely to be important for us."

She notes much of the convention focused on AI, such as who's doing what, what companies can get out of it and how it can help streamline business, and there was also plenty of discussion about the EV market.

Featonby believes the event is worth attending for people connected with the industry, whether they have a presence across the Tasman or not.

"Australia's moving quickly in a number of areas, particularly AI, so it's a great opportunity to see what's out there and bring some of those insights back to New Zealand as we continue building our own capability in that space," she adds.

"It was my first time there. We went along to look around and do some research on whether we needed a presence next year. It definitely answered that question – yes, we need to be there. It's also a good networking event, and even without a stand it's worthwhile talking to people and seeing what everyone else is up to."


Collision Connect
Collision Connect

Securing access to register 'critical'

Perhaps I'm sounding like a broken record, but there are still misconceptions or misunderstandings about the motor-vehicle register (MVR) and its importance to traders.

Access to the MVR is an essential part of day-to-day operations for car dealers. Whether assessing a trade-in, purchasing stock, verifying ownership or conducting due diligence on a vehicle, traders regularly rely on information sourced from it and its access requirements changed in November 2022.

Most dealers obtain MVR information through third-party providers which combine data from multiple sources into a single report. These are commonly referred to as vehicle history or check reports although the exact branding varies between providers.

The popularity of these services comes from their ability to present information in one easy-to-read document to help dealers make informed purchasing and appraisal decisions.

Typical information included in these reports may include money owing checks, vehicle history information, stolen car checks, security interest verification, ownership and odometer history, and safety and compliance information. For most dealerships, these reports have become an indispensable risk-management tool.

While traders often focus on the vehicle information itself, another important aspect is frequently overlooked.

When a vehicle history report includes registered owner details, the information is sourced from the MVR under authorised access provisions. This means dealers are being entrusted with access to personal data and have a legal obligation to protect this private information.

Access to registered owner details is typically granted through MTA membership or is directly approved by the NZTA, which allows approved third-party providers to supply reports containing information from the register. The important point to understand is access to MVR information is a privilege.

As expectations of privacy protection increase, the NZTA and Office of the Privacy Commissioner are placing more emphasis on how businesses access, manage and protect personal information obtained from the register.

This year, I've spoken with and assisted numerous dealers who were unaware of their obligations under section 241 of the Land Transport Act or were struggling to meet the compliance requirements highlighted through the 2025 NZTA declaration process.

LARRY FALLOWFIELD
Sector manager – dealers, Motor Trade Association

It has become evident that some traders' responses were based on misunderstanding rather than a genuine assessment of their MVR privacy controls and obligations.

As a result, I believe some operators that passed the 2025 declaration process may find the same responses and supporting evidence will be insufficient when the 2026 cycle begins.

IS YOUR BUSINESS READY?

The annual section 241 declaration is no longer simply an exercise in confirming your company has authorised access.

The NZTA expects businesses to demonstrate that privacy obligations are embedded into everyday operations and supported by documented policies, staff training and effective controls.

This means you should be prepared to provide evidence your privacy framework isn't only documented but actively followed across the organisation.

Questions the regulators will expect dealers to answer include:

- Do employees understand their obligations when accessing information?
- Have staff completed privacy and MVR-related training?
- Is there a documented process for reporting a privacy breach?
- Are user permissions reviewed regularly?
- Is access removed promptly when an employee leaves?
- Can you show how searches are monitored and audited?

If you cannot confidently answer these questions and produce supporting evidence, now is the time to review your processes.

At a minimum, dealers should have in place an MVR privacy breach response guide, employee onboarding and offboarding procedures, and an internal MVR access training programme.

Traders also need a data retention and information management policy, general statement on appropriate MVR use, and a staff training register and training records.

Dealers who wait until the NZTA declaration form lands in their inboxes may find themselves rushing to gather evidence and address compliance gaps under pressure. By contrast, companies that review their policies, strengthen their processes and invest in employee training will be far better prepared when declaration time arrives.

Industry movers

KUL SINGH KARGIL takes over as chief executive officer of Trade Me next month from Anders Skoe, who is returning to Europe.

Kargil, pictured, was previously chief commercial and marketing officer at Real Estate Australia where he was responsible for commercial divisions, audience, brand, customer experience and marketing.

Prior to that, he held senior roles across strategy, marketing, sales and brand at GE Capital and GlaxoSmithKline. He says: "Trade Me has been part of the fabric of Aotearoa for more than two decades. I feel privileged to lead this business into its next era."

Chairman Owen Wilson describes Kargil as an "exceptional leader" with the qualities needed to guide the company through its next period of growth. He adds: "Kul brings a wealth of executive experience, operational expertise and a track record of delivering growth. Anders leaves Trade Me in a strong position for the future."

TIANSHU XIN has joined Stellantis to lead its China and Asia-Pacific region. He reports to Antonio Filosa, chief executive officer, and is also a member of the leadership team.

Xin, pictured, has 30 years of experience across operations management, strategy, business development, mergers and acquisitions, sales and marketing in a range of industries.

In February 2025, he became chief operating officer of Stellantis China and head of the Stellantis Leapmotor Alliance. He continues to serve as chief executive of Leapmotor International, a role he has held since November 2023.

Gregoire Olivier has been appointed strategic adviser and Pablo Di Si has taken on the new role of chief performance officer. The latter was most recently president of Volkswagen Group North America.

DAVID LEACH has been appointed as Eroad Ltd's new CEO. The New Zealand-based executive has more than two decades of experience building, scaling and transforming technology businesses serving global markets.

Leach, pictured, is joining Eroad from holding the same position at Javln, a cloud-based insurance software company. He was previously chief and executive director of Cin7.

John Scott, Eroad's executive chair, says: "David has a track record of scaling software businesses, building high-performing teams and delivering disciplined growth."

Scott's appointment as executive chairman has been extended for a limited period to provide leadership continuity until Leach starts with the company in October.

RACHAEL COYLE has started in her new role of head of dairy, fuel and payments with the Commerce Commission.

Coyle, who is based in Wellington, has been with the regulator for 11 years and was most recently head of telecommunications in the market regulation branch.

Louise Stephenson has become regulatory investigations manager for the newly established team responsible for market regulation, while Andrew Harrison continues as fuel manager.

TO FEATURE IN INDUSTRY MOVERS EMAIL EDITOR@AUTOFILE.CO.NZ

Tony Howard with his daughter Alison. Photo: NBR

Deal on napkin start of thriving operation

The founder of the Howard Group, who was the driving force behind the business that has become Manukau Toyota Group, has passed away.

Tony Howard was a well-respected businessman whose determination, commercial instinct and belief in people helped to build one of the country's largest and most successful Toyota dealership groups.

After studying accountancy and starting off in retail, Howard entered the car industry when he bought Rio Motors in Greenlane, Auckland, from Sir Colin Giltrap.

That first dealership marked the start of a career spanning several decades.

Howard went on to establish and operate dealerships across the city representing Honda, Nissan and Toyota.

More than 35 years ago, he acquired the Toyota franchise and its premises in Gladding Place, Manukau, from the Giltrap Group.

According to Howard, the deal was signed on a paper napkin after he and Sir Colin had despatched all the lawyers out of the meeting room.

Two signatures on a napkin and the good faith inherent in that became the foundation of the group that today operates Toyota dealerships in Manukau, Botany, Papakura and Pukekohe.

Under Howard's leadership and determination to succeed, the Howard Group grew into a major automotive and commercial property business.

Manukau Toyota Group became New Zealand's largest Toyota franchise group by sales volume, serving thousands of customers each year across east and south Auckland.

Howard could recognise opportunity. His decision to secure land in Botany before the area's full growth potential was realised enabled the development of an award-winning flagship Toyota franchise.

Central to Howard's philosophy was a belief in taking on good people, trusting them to do their jobs and looking after them well. This approach created a sense of loyalty and many employees have built careers of 10, 20 and 30 years or more with the company.

He also ensured the Howard Group remained a family business when his daughter, Alison "Ali" Guise, became managing director after his retirement.

Even though he was retired, Howard took satisfaction in seeing the group continue to grow under the leadership of his family and people he had supported during their careers, including the building and opening of its new Pukekohe Toyota dealership in 2025.

Howard will be remembered as an entrepreneur, mentor and respected figure in the automotive industry.

Phone data reveals real value

One of the most common questions I hear from dealer principals and marketing managers is they are generating leads, but don't know which are turning into something.

The answer often starts with a phone call. Despite the growth of digital enquiry forms, live chat and online booking tools, it remains the highest volume touchpoint in the buyer journey.

More than 80 per cent of incoming leads come via the phone from high-intent customers ready to book, confirm or buy.

Yet for most dealerships, what happens on those calls has historically been invisible with no record of whether one became a lead and no way to know if clients got what they needed. Call-tracking technology, and specifically AI-powered call intelligence, is changing that.

Call tracking shows which marketing channels are driving calls by assigning unique tracking numbers to campaigns such as Google Search, Meta, a Trade Me listing or radio spot.

The major benefit has come from layering AI on top of that data because modern platforms listen, transcribe, classify and score calls to unlock insights that would otherwise take hours of manual review.

Not every inbound call is a sales opportunity.

For dealers handling hundreds of calls a month, separating genuine leads from general enquiries has traditionally been manual and inconsistent.

JAMES HENDRY
Director, sales and operations
AdTorque Edge NZ

For a multi-franchise New Zealand dealership that handled 1,826 calls in one month with an 81.5 per cent answer rate, this matters enormously. Of those calls, 69.1 per cent were classified as qualified leads and 1,262 conversations represented commercial opportunities. Quotes were provided on 302 occasions and bookings confirmed 304 times.

As one marketing manager put it, they now know exactly how many quotes or service calls come from a month's volume and how to substantiate spending more on it, which is the difference between defending a budget on gut feel and justifying it with evidence.

Knowing the calls that are leads is only half the picture. The other half is understanding what happens during those conversations and whether the team handles them as well as they could.

AI Coaching Agent gives visibility into how individuals handle calls, identifies missed opportunities and highlights development areas with real call examples attached to provide a different kind of feedback to mystery shopping or reviews.

A proof-of-concept analysis across eight calls showed the depth of insight this generates, highlighting sales calls ending without confirming a customer's name or vehicle details, and a web booking form that was misrouting submissions to leave callers without confirmation. These issues are hard to spot from aggregate data alone.

Call intelligence also feeds into campaign optimisation.

When AI classifies every call by intent, dealerships can optimise spend towards qualified lead calls rather than just volume, weighting attribution by outcomes instead of treating all of them as equal.

A channel that's driving high volumes but low quality isn't delivering value.

Classified leads can also trigger automated workflows in real time, such as customer relationship management updates, lead alerts, follow-up messages and escalation flags.

For this dealership, 71.1 per cent of calls and 1,299 conversations were flagged as requiring action. Automating that triage frees staff to focus on the conversation rather than admin.

As its marketing team put it, capability validates that leads are being delivered to the stores. If they aren't converting though, that points to a lead-handling issue and provides important direction to review to increase conversion rates effectively.

Call AI also enables benchmarking internally over time and against industry reference points. Answer rate, qualified lead rate, booking conversion and sentiment can be tracked monthly to create a baseline that makes improvement or decline immediately visible, which is drawn from calls rather than self-reported data.

Across a group, consistency becomes a competitive tool. Strong call scores can be identified and replicated, while results with gaps can be prioritised for coaching.

Road ahead for next government

With an election approaching, there will inevitably be plenty of discussion about what different sectors want from the next government.

For our new-vehicle industry, the message is relatively simple. We aren't asking for constant policy change or bespoke New Zealand rules developed in isolation from the rest of the world.

We need a stable, modern regulatory environment that gives businesses confidence to plan and invest while making it easier to bring the safest, cleanest and most technologically advanced vehicles to this country.

There are three areas where the government can make a real difference. First is to make stage two of the clean vehicle standard (CVS) genuinely evidence-led.

The decision to retain the scheme, and recalibrate its future targets and settings is welcome.

The MIA supported retaining a regulated standard, but we have consistently argued its targets must reflect the realities of the New Zealand market.

Product planning, model lifecycles and allocation decisions happen globally, often years before a vehicle reaches our shores.

Stage two of its review is the opportunity to get that calibration right. For the MIA, success looks like this. Start with real vehicle and market data, credible industry forecasts, expected volumes and mix, technology availability and realistic future product supply.

Then test that evidence against economic analysis, international experience, the conditions needed to support uptake, and what New Zealand consumers and companies want, need and can reasonably afford.

AIMEE WILEY
Chief executive officer,
Motor Industry Association

Good targets should be the output of the evidence, not the starting assumption. That means testing ambition against what can realistically be supplied, purchased and used here.

We shouldn't simply adopt a target set for another market or create unrealistic goals and expect New Zealand's vehicle market to somehow make it work.

Forward forecasting will always be necessary, but it must be grounded in credible product and market evidence rather than assumptions about technologies, models or levels of buyer uptake that may emerge several years from now.

The final test is straightforward. And that's can the proposed CVS settings realistically work across our market, including different vehicle segments and use cases, without unintended consequences for availability, affordability or choice?

Second, the rules holding new technology back need to be modernised. There is little value in encouraging newer, cleaner and safer vehicles into our fleet if the system then makes it harder than it should be to get them on our roads.

The reality is that parts of our land-transport regulatory framework haven't kept pace with global vehicle development.

The Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Rule is an example. Modern heavy vehicles, including battery electric and Euro 6 trucks, can be constrained by requirements designed for an earlier generation of models. Batteries, emissions-control equipment and advanced safety technologies can all add to vehicle dimensions or weight.

Elsewhere, internationally accepted technologies can still require exemptions, modification or additional certification simply because our rules haven't yet caught up. That adds cost, delay and uncertainty, and can slow the arrival of technology already proven overseas.

The issue is that the process for changing rules and recognising new technology can be too slow and complex for the pace at which the global vehicle market is moving.

We need a faster and more systematic approach to rule reform with greater recognition of Australian Design Rules and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe standards. Where credible international standards already exist, New Zealand should start from a position of recognition and ask whether there's a compelling reason to depart from them.

This would allow our regulatory system to maintain strong safety levels while keeping pace with proven new technology.

Finally, there needs to be a focus on fleet renewal and preparation for what comes next. We have one of the oldest fleets in the OECD and it continues to age, which slows the uptake of newer safety, efficiency and emissions-reduction technologies.

Every newer vehicle crossing the border brings improved crash protection, driver-assistance technology, energy efficiency and emissions performance. Those benefits flow through multiple owners over the vehicle's lifetime.

We also need to look ahead. Connected, automated and software-based technologies are developing rapidly. New Zealand shouldn't have to wait years for technologies already transforming automotive markets overseas.

As a small market, our advantage isn't in inventing unique regulatory systems. It's in moving quickly, aligning intelligently with credible international standards and creating an environment where proven new technology can reach our country sooner.

None of these priorities requires us to reinvent the wheel. They require stable policy, modern regulation and decisions grounded in evidence. Last month's CVS decision provides a strong foundation and retains the framework while recognising its settings need to work for our market. The same approach should be applied across the wider regulatory system by modernising outdated rules, supporting fleet renewal, and making it easier for Kiwis to access safer, cleaner and more advanced cars.

The month that was... September

September 24, 2004

Enforcement under fire

The Motor Trade Association (MTA) and Independent Motor Vehicle Dealers Association (IMVDA), approached the Ministry of Economic Development's national enforcement unit (NEU) asking for updates on the Motor Vehicle Sales Act.

Chief of the IMVDA, David Vinsen, said his organisation had officially requested an outline of the NEU's policies, procedures and progress completed to date. That came after MTA staff met with Shane Keohane, head of the unit, to discuss unregistered traders.

According to Keohane, the NEU's number-one priority was to ensure compliance with the law. To pursue that, the unit continued to investigate all instances of unregistered trading reported to it, usually by means of letters requesting registration.

But Mike Mapperson, owner of Cooper Cars in Auckland, told Autofile this position was unacceptable. He said: "All they are doing is finding unregistered traders and inviting them to register.

"The cost of registration is a slap with a bus ticket when you think registered dealers who have paid the fee are getting bigger fines for having the wrong window cards on their cars."

September 23, 2005

Branding foundation achieved

More than a year after its major relaunch, the MTA had built up a solid brand foundation and was actively consolidating achievements it had made, according to the organisation's annual review.

Published in anticipation of the MTA's conference in Fiji during October, the review outlined the association's progress in nine key areas.

One of those was the development of its brand. The review cited the results of an AC Nielsen survey in which 88 per cent of respondents said they recognised or linked the MTA to the automotive industry and 77 per cent rated being an MTA member as somewhat or very important.

Other areas of improvement included standards as evidenced by a steady decline in calls to the MTA's mediation line.

As for membership, numbers were trending upwards "as more industry businesses formally commit to standards required by the MTA's customer promise and meet the membership criteria".

For the year ending June 30, 2005, the association's revenue was up from $7.7m to $7.9m. Some 46 per cent was from trading sales, 28 per cent from investment, 22 per cent from membership subscriptions, and four per cent was from its conference and sponsorship.

September 11, 2009

Samoa's exclusive dealership revealed

While many New Zealand-based dealerships had been pitching to export right-hand-drive (RHD) vehicles to Samoa, rumours had also been swirling that one company had gained the business.

The announcement that Motor1 would open a dealership in Apia that month sparked a lot of interest. The importer spent nine months working with Samoa's government on a vehicle import-export strategy, said Mark Lewis, of Motor1, one of New Zealand's largest car importers.

He added: "The strategy not only supports Samoa's now active legislation, but also promotes an environmentally sound, cost-effective and safe alternative to ownership in what's now a left-hand-drive country."

Cars traded in with Motor1 in Samoa would be shipped to New Zealand before being on-sold to buyers in South America, Europe and Asia. Older cars unsuitable for this would need to be scrapped.

Lewis said: "A lot of the late-model vehicles still hold significant value on the international market.

"There's no need for vehicles to be dumped. Neither is there a reason for local owners to be duped out a fair price for their old cars."

September 2018

Industry on alert for stink-bug season

The automotive supply chain was expected to cope with the onset of the high-risk period for brown marmorated stink bugs, although teething problems were possible.

September 1 saw the start of the new season for the biosecurity threat that caused havoc across the supply chain earlier in 2018.

Heat treatment of all used vehicles and machinery from Japan was now mandatory, as well as approved pathways for new vehicles, to prevent the bugs getting into New Zealand. Issues facing the supply chain had been exacerbated by Typhoon Jebi hitting western Japan on September 4.

Although delays would be possible during the stink-bug season, not as many forward bookings for vehicles in Japan as normal were being made at that time. Traders had been reporting lower business activity, the dollar's cross-rate with the yen had tumbled and there was a lack of storage in Japan.

On top of that, heat-treatment surcharges ranged from $225-$250 per vehicle depending on the service provider.

Switch needs to follow fleet's life

In the previous issue of Autofile, Drive Electric's 2026 election manifesto was covered under the headline "drive to bring back tougher import laws".

I think there's more agreement between VIA and Drive Electric than the headline might suggest because we want our light fleet to move towards low and zero-emissions vehicles, and the sooner the better.

We want OEMs building their best technology, fleets buying EVs, enough charging infrastructure to make those vehicles practical and new EVs entering the market today to become affordable used vehicles in the years ahead.

Drive Electric is focused on accelerating EV uptake. VIA approaches the transition from the perspective of the whole fleet.

That distinction matters when the manifesto describes New Zealand's reliance on used imports as a "dependency" and refers to "older technology" and "older, less efficient imports".

Used imports are older, but that doesn't necessarily mean less efficient and it doesn't automatically mean older technology. Age, technology and environmental performance are related, but aren't the same thing.

The latest Ministry of Transport (MoT) data illustrates the point.

VIA's reconstruction of light-vehicle cohorts, including zero-tailpipe EVs, indicates the actual mix of vehicles entering New Zealand as used averaged around 15 per cent lower-rated CO2 exhaust emissions than those entering the fleet new in 2023 and 2024.

The same issue appears with harmful air pollution. The NZTA's Rightcar methodology rates petrol hybrids at five stars and Euro 5 petrol vehicles at four.

KIT WILKERSON
Head of policy and strategy
kit@via.org.nz

A Euro 6d diesel car gets three stars and a Euro 6d diesel van or ute receives two.

That's relevant to what's being imported. Efficient Japanese petrol hybrids make up a substantial part of used supply, while some of our highest-volume new vehicles remain diesel utes. A car doesn't become clean because it's new or dirty because it is used.

None of this is an argument against EVs, but the opposite.

The new-vehicle market is where the strongest pressure should go because that's where technology can still be changed.

Some of our highest-volume new vehicles remain diesel utes

OEMs can decide what models to develop and build, which powertrains to use and what stock will be available to future used-car buyers.

Used importers can only choose from what's already in the secondary market, which leads to what we think should be a fairly simple policy principle.

Technology transition obligations should follow the fleet's lifecycle. New-vehicle requirements should lead, reflecting the ability of marques to determine the specification of future models.

Equivalent expectations for used imports should follow after an appropriate fleet-age lag once vehicles meeting those expectations have had sufficient time to enter the global secondary market in commercially meaningful volumes.

Put simply, if we want 10-year-old EVs to be available in 10 years' time, somebody has to build them in 2026. We cannot arrive in 2036 and penalise the used market because OEMs didn't produce enough EVs a decade prior.

The MoT already recognises this problem. In its 2024 review of the clean vehicle standard, officials noted allowing more time would enable the volume of EVs available to import from Japan to increase.

More recent ministry analysis similarly distinguishes the two markets – demand for EVs is a major issue in the new market, while used is constrained by stock that exists in source countries.

This is also why we agree with Drive Electric about corporate fleets. EVs entering the new market today will progressively become the used vehicles New Zealanders buy in the future. We want that pipeline to become as large as possible.

But a stronger NZ-new used-vehicle pipeline doesn't make independent imports undesirable.

If we relied only on vehicles originally supplied to this country as new, tomorrow's used market would be limited to the stock that happened to come in earlier years.

Independent imports give us another source of supply, allowing buyers to draw from much larger overseas stocks and select models that meet the country's needs at affordable prices.

That's better understood as diversification than dependency. For everyday households, the relevant comparison is usually between a 10-year-old hybrid and the much older car being driven now.

If somebody cannot afford a new electric car, preventing them from buying a cleaner, safer and more efficient used vehicle doesn't put an EV on their driveway. It can leave the older vehicle on the road for longer.

That's why VIA keeps coming back to fleet renewal. Push the new market hard towards zero emissions, encourage fleets to buy those vehicles, build the charging network and create the stock we want for the future.

At the same time, we need to make the best possible use of vehicles that already exist, help Kiwis move into better cars at price points they can afford, and accelerate the retirement of the oldest, least safe and highest-emitting parts of the fleet.

The quickest transition comes from creating tomorrow's zero-emissions fleet as quickly as possible while improving what we have today.

In-cabin experience 'connected'

The eighth-generation ES will arrive on our shores this year, ushering in a new era for the luxury sedan with the introduction of Lexus Connected Services technology.

There will also be a wider electrified line-up spanning hybrid and battery-electric powertrains with pricing starting from $96,900 plus on-road costs.

Andrew Davis, vice-president of Lexus NZ, says the all-new ES marks a major step forward for the marque here.

"The ES has long resonated with New Zealand drivers for its refinement, comfort and quiet driving experience," he adds.

"What's compelling about this new generation is the way it evolves those strengths through a more contemporary design, increased spaciousness and a significantly more connected in-cabin experience."

The fully electric ES 500e Dynamic introduces the marque's interactive manual drive with an eight-speed virtual gear system.

In manual mode, drivers can use paddle shifters to select gears while the low-mounted battery lowers the centre of gravity to enhance dynamic capability.

The all-new ES 500e Dynamic

Inspired by the LF-ZC concept revealed in 2023, the interior of the new ES adopts a minimal and open layout with a focus on rear-seat space for "optimum" comfort.

The ES will also become the first Lexus launched here with connected services capability, with Davis saying the system has been designed to make owning the car feel easier and more reassuring.

Its features include remote lock and unlock capability, vehicle status updates, cloud-based navigation and vehicle tracking.

The two hybrids, the ES 300h Premium and Limited, start at $96,900 and $104,900 respectively, plus on-road costs. The ES 500e Dynamic is priced from $109,900.


The new RZ features a steer-by-wire system and yoke steering wheel

The six-seater Lexus TZ

STEERING BY WIRE

Lexus' latest all-electric SUV has been launched as the new-vehicle market here "starts to stabilise" and demand for EVs grows.

The RZ combines a yoke steering wheel with the marque's steer-by-wire system.

Instead of a traditional connection, steering inputs are translated electronically with the aim of delivering faster response, greater precision and a more controlled drive.

The system adapts to speed, providing lighter inputs at low speeds and greater stability on the open road without the need for hand-over-hand steering.

"This is a major step forward for Lexus in New Zealand," says Davis. "Steer-by-wire fundamentally changes how the vehicle responds. Once you experience it, you understand the benefit immediately.

"It's an example of introducing new technology in a way that feels natural and easy to use.

"There's been a lot of change in the market over the past 12 to 18 months, but our approach hasn't needed to change.

"We built flexibility into our line-up from the start and what we're seeing now is the market aligning with that."

As Lexus' first model built on a dedicated battery-electric platform, the RZ represents the fully electric end of its line-up. Its advancements include a WLTP range of up to 460km, increased power, enhanced charging capability and a new 22kW onboard AC charger.

Davis says the RZ sits alongside Lexus' hybrids and plug-in hybrids, reinforcing the brand's multi-powertrain approach.

'DRIVING LOUNGE' SPACE

The all-new TZ is Lexus' first three-row fully electric SUV made on its dedicated EV platform.

"The weight distribution and low centre of gravity make it feel stable and composed on the road," says Davis. "It changes the way passengers experience long-distance SUV travel."

Developed under the concept of "driving lounge", the TZ prioritises people and shared experiences with a spacious interior.

A newly developed platform, slim panoramic roof and quietness combine to "create an open and calming cabin environment".

Davis adds: "Our multi-powertrain approach is important because customers are on different journeys. The TZ sits at the fully electric end of that strategy and shows what's possible when Lexus leverages the benefits of a dedicated EV platform."

Sustainable materials, such as forged bamboo and recycled aluminium, are used while the SUV's circular-vehicle development incorporates manufacturing processes designed to minimise environmental impact.

More information and specifications will be released closer to local launch in early 2027.

Hybrids extend brand's range

Nissan is boosting its top-selling X-Trail line-up with new two-wheel-drive (2WD) e-Power hybrid variants and the debut of two "adventure-focused" Rock Creek grades.

The ST-L and Ti-L hybrids offer 150kW of power and combined fuel consumption of 5.4l/100km, an improvement of about 11.5 per cent over the AWD e-Power variants, which deliver 6.1l/100km.

Combined carbon-dioxide emissions for the 2WD hybrids are 123g/km compared to 139g/km for their AWD stablemates.

The distinctive new grades of the X-Trail Rock Creek, meanwhile, have been developed for buyers seeking a more "rugged interpretation" of a family SUV.

Offered in seven-seat configuration for the petrol model and five-seat configuration for the e-Power, they are built on the AWDs of the ST-L petrol and e-Power respectively.

Outside, they have a black V-motion grille, black roof rails, gloss-black door mirrors and exclusive 18-inch alloys.

Inside, durable ballistic nylon-trimmed seats feature embroidered badging, and there's orange contrast stitching across the seats and dashboard trim.

Both Rock Creek variants feature a "technology step-up" over the ST-L donor grade, adding a 10.8-inch head-up display and a 12.3-inch full TFT instrument cluster.


The X-Trail Rock Creek

Until September 30, all four X-Trails are being offered with $6,000 off. The introductory prices are $49,990 plus on-road costs for the ST-L, $55,990 for the Ti-L, $50,590 for the Rock Creek petrol seven-seater and $55,590 for the 4WD e-Power Rock Creek variant.

NISMO GETS MANUAL

The Nissan Z range is gaining its first manual Nismo, a redesigned Z Coupe front end, and equipment and chassis upgrades.

The headline change for this year is the arrival in New Zealand of the six-speed manual Nismo. It's the first time the marque's most focused Z has been offered with such a transmission in this country.

It joins the existing automatic variant, taking the Z line-up to four grades along with the manual and automatic Z Coupes.

The Nismo manual uses a short-stroke six-speed gearbox with an exclusively tuned drive mode.

In this form, it delivers 309kW of power and 520Nm of torque for an increase of 11kW and 45Nm.

For 2026, the Z Nismo models also adopt two-piece front-brake rotors derived from the GT-R. These components reduce unsprung mass by about 9kg.

The new Z Coupe has a redesigned front bumper and grille, and new 19-inch alloys. In addition, manual and automatic variants feature upgraded Nismo monotube dampers for improved handling and ride comfort.

Leading the Coupe's palette is a new hero shade called unryu green, which is joined by the return of boulder grey two-tone with a black roof.

"The Z is an icon," says Steve Milette, managing director of Nissan Oceania. "It has always been about the connection between driver and car, so bringing a manual to the Nismo and genuine GT-R-derived hardware doubles down on our promise to our most committed enthusiasts."

The 2026 Z range, including the new manual Nismo, is now available for order with first customer arrivals slated for this month.

The Z Coupe starts at $89,990 and the Z Nismo is priced from $108,500 plus on-road costs, and exclude premium paint and statutory charges.


Nissan's Z Nismo

CareVets racer takes out trophy

Taylor Mitchell has won the 2026 Toyota 86 Trophy Series thanks to a mature drive that saw him banking points all through the final meeting.

Nathan Grammer won the opening race of the weekend at Manfeild, and Nieko Scoles took out the second before Grammer surged through to win the championship's last race.

Mitchell posted a fourth place in that opening race, and was swamped and finished seventh in the second. However, he bounced back to podium in the final race to wrap up the four-round series title.

Racing with the CareVets team, Mitchell arrived at the final round from August 1-2 with a decent points lead. But with three winners from three races at the penultimate Manfeild round, he couldn't afford to cruise home.

Most racers had adjusted their vehicles' set-up after the previous weekend, meaning the racing would be close and results could be very different from what went before.

Two competitions exist within the series, the trophy itself and a winter series for more experienced racers.

In the trophy series, Mitchell sat just 12 points ahead of Scoles, both of whom are huge "finds" on the New Zealand racing scene, while Riley Boswell had shown strong form through the series in a family-run team and was third, 39 points behind Scoles.

In the winter series, Toby Elmiger was 20 points ahead of Scoles with Mitchell only four more points behind. Grammer and Boswell were a little further back, but well within striking distance.

Taylor Mitchell's win means he will step up to the main Toyota GR 86 Championship

Last season's champion Lee Zeltwanger proved the winter campaign was a great springboard into the summer season and went on to win the rookie title in the 2025/26 Bridgestone GR86 Championship.

At stake for the overall trophy winner was a ride in the CareVets Scholarship GR86 for the 2026/27 championship with the vehicle, engineer and mechanic costs all taken care of along with $10,000 from Crème Insurance.

In race one, Grammer missed second gear off the start line and dropped to eighth place, then swept back through the field to win. He stormed past leader and pole-position holder Marcel Bartley at the infield hairpin on the sixth lap to take the lead.

"I got a good initial launch but just that shift into second I got slightly wrong," says Grammer. "I hit neutral down the straight and watched everyone go by.

"The car was absolutely on fire though. It was absolutely insane in the wet and that helped me get back up to first. It's great to see Marcel get third too and it was a fun race."

In race two, Invercargill's Scoles took his third – and most important – victory of the series. His great start saw him grab second behind leader Riley Boswell, and he pressured the latter's yellow car throughout the race until the sixth lap when he found a way past.

Scoles describes it as his best win of the series. "I got a mean launch, made a great start and got great traction away from the line which got me up to second.

"Full respect to Riley, he had plenty of pace in that race but I was able to get by. It put me in a strong position for the final race and I was aiming to do exactly the same in that one."

With Mitchell finishing well back in seventh, race two gave Scoles an eight-point advantage with 75 points available for each race win.

It all came down to race three.


Toby Elmiger led off the start in race three and battled eventual winner Grammer to the very end

Nathan Grammer's performance marks him as one to watch over future seasons

Elmiger took the lead in lap one, closely followed by Grammer.

Pole-position holder Josh Hill was third, but the big mover in the first lap had been Mitchell who moved from seventh to fourth ahead of Boswell and Scoles.

As Grammer and Elmiger battled for the lead, all eyes were on the fight for the trophy title.

On the sixth lap Mitchell came through to third ahead of Hill, Boswell and Scoles, who was watching his title hopes fade.

Elmiger ran wide at the infield hairpin on the ninth lap and let the title-battlers through. That cleared the way for Grammer and Mitchell to come home first and second.

There was some consolation for Scoles who won the winter series class, but the big prize went to Mitchell.

CareVets Scholarship boss Keith Houston praised Mitchell's speed. "He's done very well indeed and we're all looking forward to seeing how he goes in the rookie class of the Bridgestone GR86 Championship next season.

"It was very close. Nieko has run some brilliant races and it was an exciting race."

Mitchell was ecstatic. "I'm speechless. I knew what I had to do and I drove as hard as I could. To get second overall in that race after the last two races was more than I had hoped.

"It's just great to win the trophy and I'm excited about what's to come in the main championship."

Quentin Palmer and Noel Moloney in action. Photo: Chelsea Karl

Team's third victory 'went like clockwork'

Quentin Palmer and co-driver Noel Moloney continued their winning form in this year's Hawkeswood Mining North Island Rally Series (NIRS) by claiming victory in the BP Rally Taumarunui.

They have been the team to beat this season having won the first two rounds, but were forced to miss the Taranaki Tarmac Rally third round because of their New Zealand Rally Championship commitments.

That meant Palmer and Moloney went into the Taumarunui event on August 8 facing strong opposition from Tony Differ and Jayson Stringer in their Mitsubishi Lancer EX Turbo, Carlin Leon and Nathan Roa in their Subaru Impreza WRX and Gavin and Hamish Feast, also with an Impreza.

Driving their Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, Palmer and Moloney won every competitive stage to build a comfortable margin of more than four minutes.

"It went like clockwork," says Palmer. "It was a good day and privilege to win on the return of this event to the NIRS calendar.

"The first couple of stages were a challenge with slippery conditions but after that grip improved over the day."

Second overall, but not registered for the series, were Zeal Jones and novice co-driver Finn Fenning in their Impreza.

The former is back in Aotearoa after an 18-month stint in Japan and Finland with Toyota Gazoo Racing's world rally team.

Third overall and the second NIRS competitors home were Vanuatu's Julien Lenglet and Kiwi navigator Fleur Pedersen, also in a WRX.

Based in Taumarunui and promoted by two district councils and Dannevirke Car Club, the one-day national event consisted of eight special stages over 135km of King Country public-gravel roads last used in 1999 as a NZ Rally Championship round. A four-stage 64km clubman's rally was run over the afternoon's loops of stages.

The NIRS heads for the penultimate round, the Rally Bay of Plenty, on October 31. Starting and finishing in Whakatane, this event is an enduro special on gravel and forestry roads around the Eastern Bay of Plenty's districts.

The final round of the series is the Maramarua Rally in north Waikato on November 14.

Based in Te Kauwhata, it's steeped in rally folklore. It boasts three 40km loops to create 120km of fast and smooth forest special stages. The event is open to international competitors.

Kiwi offroader leads series across Tasman

Boston Morgan-Horan and his new Mason Trophy Truck. Photo: AORC

Young offroad racing sensation Boston Morgan-Horan has taken the outright lead of the Motorsport Australia Offroad Championship (AORC) with one round remaining after winning the Loveday 400 in South Australia.

His and fellow Kiwi and navigator Will Haddock's performances were nearly faultless from the prologue right through to the final section of the event.

They finished eight minutes and 18 seconds ahead of second-placed Beau Robinson and Shane Hutt, with Todd Lehmann and Tanner James a further six minutes back.

And the wraps came off Morgan-Horan's new V8-powered 4WD Mason Trophy Truck at the Loveday meeting at the end of July.

He says: "I am pretty ecstatic. I can't thank everyone enough, all the boys and Lloyd for getting me here. It was my first run in the truck and it was a picture-perfect weekend."

Morgan-Horan now sets his sights on the final stop of the AORC, the Kalgoorlie Desert Race in Western Australia from October 23-25.

"The plan is to go to Kalgoorlie and get to the end," he says.

"It would mean a lot to win the championship. I've actually been trying to win races but I'm now in a position where I can win it outright. It will mean a lot when it comes around."

No provision in legislation to return trade-in to consumer rejecting car supplied in deal

The case: The buyer rejected her 2014 Mercedes-Benz C180 after its paint job peeled twice despite the trader's attempts to remedy the issue. The dealer accepted the rejection of the car. However, the consumer held on to the vehicle because she wanted her Honda trade-in returned as well as a refund of her loan repayments. She also suggested the paint could be redone.

The decision: The dealer was ordered to pay the purchaser $4,231.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal via video link.

Background

Krystle Taiapo bought a 2014 Mercedes-Benz C180 from 1 Stop Motors Ltd for $25,890 on September 22 last year. She paid for it by trading in her Honda Stream for $2,000 and with an MTF Finance loan.

Five months later, she rejected the car because its exterior paint was peeling. The dealer accepted her rejection.

The trader said it would arrange for the reimbursement of loan payments and refund the $2,000 for the Honda as soon as Taiapo returned the C180.

However, she wanted the Stream returned to her and to be refunded all her MTF payments including interest. If she couldn't have those terms, she wanted to keep the C180 and have 1 Stop Motors repaint it.

The case

Both parties were told at the start of the hearing that if there was no dispute over the rejection of the C180, then before the tribunal would consider Taiapo's request for it to be repaired she needed to persuade it that she could set aside her decision to reject it.

The adjudicator expressed a tentative view that it doubted she would do so given ownership of the C180 was revested in 1 Stop Motors on notification of rejection.

Taiapo was also told if she overcame that legal obstacle, she would then need to satisfy the tribunal there had been a failure to comply with the guarantee of acceptable quality in the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA).

Faced with those issues, she elected to focus on remedies the tribunal could award in her favour to give effect to her rejection of the C180.

At purchase, Taiapo entered into a loan agreement and the term was 60 months at an interest rate of 23.3 per cent. She agreed to make weekly payments of $181.24 starting on September 30, 2025. Up to May 9, 2026, she had made principal repayments totalling $2,231 and paid interest of $5,686.

Two weeks post-purchase, Taiapo discovered the car's exterior was peeling so the trader repainted it.

However, in early February, the paint started to come off again and she discovered the vehicle's original colour was white.

She considered that created a "material insurance risk as the car's physical state does not match its legal record".

On February 13, Taiapo rejected the vehicle, which was accepted by the dealer. Its director Giancario Moretti said 1 Stop Motors would refund the finance payments made to Taiapo within two business days of the C180 being returned.

Taiapo told the trader she wanted her Honda back. Moretti said: "The courts would just say you are refunded the trade-in value amount." In this case that was $2,000. But if she wanted the Honda back, she would have to cover the C180's $6,000 paint job.

She refused to refund the cost to repaint the car. Instead, she decided to retain it until the Honda was returned to her.

By that time, she had travelled 11,000km in the Mercedes-Benz. She told the hearing it hadn't been driven since she gave her notice of rejection. The trader collected it on the day of the hearing.

The finding

The CGA states a consumer is entitled to a refund or another consideration provided in respect of rejected goods, or replacement with goods of the same type and of similar value to replace what's been rejected.

Refund, in this context, means a refund in cash of the money paid or the value of any other consideration provided, or both as required. While Taiapo could opt to receive a refund or replacement, she couldn't insist on the return of her trade-in.

The trader didn't dispute its liability to refund all principals repaid by her. The interest payments were different because they weren't paid in respect of the rejected car, but were the cost of acquiring the funds to buy it.

However, if paying interest is a loss reasonably foreseeable from the failure in issue, the tribunal does treat interest payments as recoverable under the CGA.

In this case, apart from two periods when the C180 was with 1 Stop Motors, Taiapo had full use of the vehicle.

The interest paid to the date of rejection was about $2,550. The tribunal wasn't satisfied that expense was a reasonably foreseeable loss, so that amount was offset by Taiapo's use of the car.

She refused to return the C180 unless the trader returned the traded-in Honda.

But the CGA doesn't provide a means of returning a trade-in to a consumer rejecting the acquired vehicle. That being the case, the tribunal had no means of ordering the refund of any interest paid from the date of rejection.

The problem in this case was that after Taiapo rejected the vehicle, she chose to retain it and the dealer responded by continuing to debit payments under the loan agreement.

While not entirely satisfactory, the trader's actions were in part justified in that Taiapo maintained, until the hearing, she might have preferred to keep the C180.

The interest payments after the date of rejection were not the result of the car's failures but decisions made by the parties after it was rejected.

Order

The trader was ordered to pay Taiapo $4,231, which was the principal paid plus the trade-in's value of $2,000.

A 2014 Mercedes-Benz C180

Adjudicator agrees with dealer too much oil put into engine meant it needed to be replaced

The case: The buyer rejected her 2016 Range Rover Sport after a warning light came on. Her husband added three litres of oil, which overfilled the engine and caused it to fail.

The decision: The trader said it wasn't notified about any engine-oil light issue. It added the purchaser had free roadside assistance but hadn't used it so it wasn't responsible for repairs. The application under the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA) was dismissed.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal via video link.

Background

Natasha Mtakwa purchased a 2016 Range Rover Sport for $64,549 from Auto 66 Ltd on June 6, 2023.

In July of the same year, the car was involved in a crash requiring extensive repairs. Soon after it was fixed, a warning light came on and the buyer's husband added some oil. But the engine failed and needed to be replaced.

The applicant rejected the vehicle. Auto 66 said overfilling the engine with lubricant caused it to fail.

The case

The car was returned to Mtakwa in October 2023 and two months later an "engine oil critically low" warning light came on so the buyer's husband added about three litres of lubricant.

Darryn Caulfield, director of Auto 66, noted free roadside assistance was available but wasn't used and no contact was made with the dealer before the oil was added.

Mtakwa submitted: "[My husband] Eddie isn't a mechanic and acted in good faith in response to the dashboard warning. White smoke was observed and the vehicle was moved a short distance to Baigent Motors."

An invoice from Baigent Motors stated about nine litres of oil were drained from the sump and it was unable to road test the car because of lubricant in the intake.

Intercooler and intake hoses were removed to drain the oil, the engine was started and a noise was present. It added: "This does not state a conclusion that oil overfill caused engine failure."

After Mtakwa's insurance claim for repairs was declined, her husband asked for a review of their case. "It's plausible the damage resulted from human error in adding too much oil rather than from normal wear and tear," he said. "We believe this incident falls under the category of accidental damage, which should be covered under our policy."

On September 11, 2024, policy provider IAG replied: "Our assessor has confirmed the failure is not accident-related, likely due to mechanical wear and tear, and not related to overfilling the engine with oil."

On October 19, Mr Mtakwa replied to IAG: "I have attached a professional opinion from Turbo & Diesel Automotive Services. It states overfilling the engine with oil by three litres, as occurred in my case, would cause hydraulic pressure leading to significant damage to the engine.

"This is consistent with damage observed by Baigent Motors and the findings of Duncan & Ebbett, which noted low engine compression and presence of metal particles in the oil filter. Additionally, the 2016 Range Rover manual advises that overfilling the engine with oil can cause serious damage."

Notwithstanding the submissions made to IAG, Mtakwa maintained at the hearing and in the application to the tribunal that the failure arose from "general wear and tear" and a lack of durability, but the actual cause hadn't been established.

In part, that was based on Duncan & Ebbett's pricing for a replacement engine. However, the repairer hadn't been told about the oil overfill.

IAG advised the claim had been denied because of the policy wording. This stated: "The type of damage claimed [the mechanical breakdown, failure of your vehicle] from an accidental oil overfill is excluded."

The tribunal's assessor noted when that particular engine model was released, he was Jaguar Land Rover's highest-qualified technician at dealer level in New Zealand.

He disagreed with IAG's opinion in its email of September 2024 and noted referenced issues were related to other models. His view was the engine failed due to oil overfilling.

The dealer was also of the opinion the overfilling caused the failure. It stated: "During earlier discussions at our premises, Eddie Mtakwa acknowledged he had added the excess oil, which ultimately led to the damage. Auto 66 cannot be held responsible for events that occurred entirely outside of our control."

It wasn't until after the insurance claim had been denied that Mtakwa pursued the trader and then made an application to the tribunal. She submitted the claim was their "last resort" and someone needed to take responsibility for what had occurred.

Her husband added there was a known history of failures with the engine model in the Range Rover and it was possible the car was "one of the bad ones".

The finding

Mtakwa had to establish if there had been a breach of the CGA.

The cause of the engine failure was her husband overfilling the oil.

The tribunal didn't accept the issue arose through wear and tear and a durability failure, or the cause hadn't been established.

It clearly had been and the adjudicator noted the couple were arguing with the insurance company that overfilling was the cause. It was only when the matter came before the tribunal that their position changed.

The adjudicator didn't consider there was a clear link between the oil caution light and the vehicle's condition at purchase. If it had been an issue then, the light would have come on sooner.

The other possibility was that an issue with sensors or the engine, unrelated to repairs, developed over time. If that was the case, it might have been a durability failure. However, no evidence was received to explain why the warning light came on in the first place.

Order

The application was dismissed.

A 2016 Range Rover Sport

Global tour celebrates heritage

Dozens of Mercedes-Benz fans travelled in style across the country as part of the marque's journey dubbed 140 Years, 140 Places.

After visiting Asia, the roadshow came down under to celebrate the "heritage, innovation and passionate community" that define the company in New Zealand.

The global tour is a celebration of the 140th anniversary of Carl Benz filing the patent for the first automobile.

Three travelling new S-Class models were given heritage-inspired names as part of the event. New Zealand welcomed Gottlieb, a nod to Gottlieb Daimler, while Carl and Bertha toured Australia.

The Kiwi leg of the journey was launched at Flying Fish film studios in Auckland where VIP guests, media and friends of the brand celebrated the origins of motoring in Aotearoa.

The evening paid tribute to the arrival of New Zealand's first motor vehicles in 1898 when Wellington politician William McLean imported two Benz vehicles, the Petrolette and Lightning, aboard the SS Rotomahana.

Broadcaster Mike McRoberts was on hand to introduce the latest S-Class, which was revealed from within a period-inspired container. The model will be launched on our shores later this year.

From Auckland, a convoy headed south to Ardmore Airport where Mercedes-Benz owners and enthusiasts gathered at the Warbirds Association Hangar as classic, rare and contemporary models came together, with the display showcasing the evolution

↑ Mercedes-Benzes at the Warbirds Association Hangar, Ardmore
← On display at Ardmore
→ The Mercedes-Benz convoy between Ayrburn and Highlands Park
↓ Mercedes-Benz NZ's event team and staff
↙ On-track action

of the S-Class across almost every generation.

Lloyd Marx, an owner and guest, was invited to apply the official commemorative sticker featuring an image of his 1963 (W111) 220 SE to the new S-Class.

Continuing the tour's tradition, each major stop was marked with a bespoke location sticker placed on the S-Class to create a visual record of the journey.

The convoy of vehicles travelled south via Taupo and Hawke's Bay before visiting Paraparaumu's Southward Car Museum, which is home to the oldest surviving motor vehicle in New Zealand – an 1895 Benz Velo imported by Christchurch businessman Nicholas Oates in 1900.

The South Island section of the tour took in places such as Kaikoura and Lake Tekapo before arriving at Ayrburn Estate in Arrowtown, where participants were met by a privately owned collection of Mercedes-Benzes arriving in convoy from Dunedin.

Then it was onto Highlands Motorsport Park, where classics joined the new S-Class and Mercedes-AMG GT 63.

"Together, the cars brought 140 years of history to life on track, creating a powerful scene that united early classics with today's luxury and performance flagships," says a Mercedes-Benz NZ spokesperson.

"It captured the spirit of the global tour of connecting generations of vehicles, owners, fans and collectors through a shared passion for the brand."

The New Zealand leg took six days, covered about 3,800km, and generated more than 10,000 photos and videos before the journey continued in July to India.

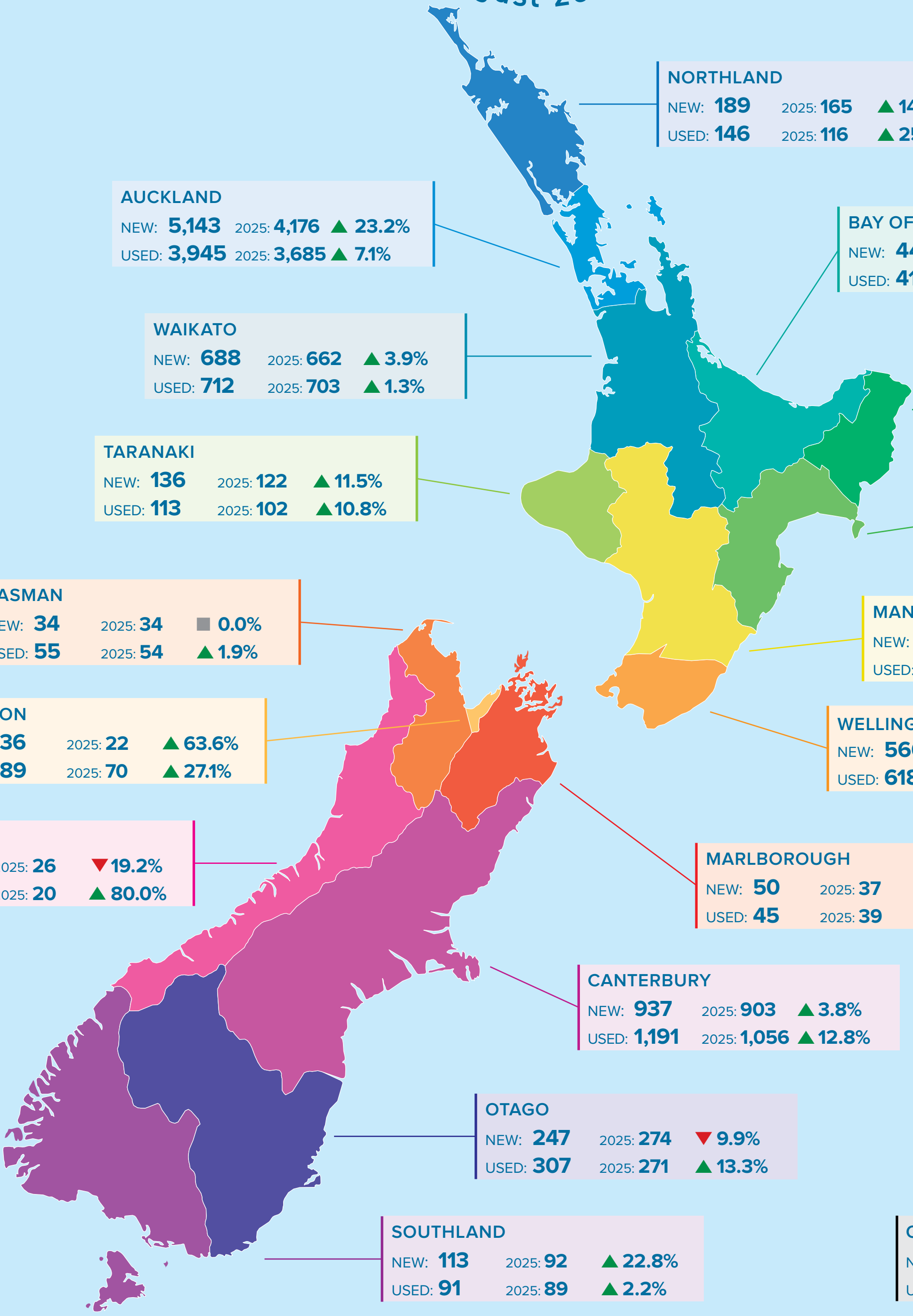
The convoy's stop-off at Cromwell

A 1963 (W111) 220 SE

AROUND THE COUNTRY
August 2026

Total new cars
9,137
2025: 8,088 ▲ 13.0%

Total imported used cars
8,156
2025: 7,465 ▲ 9.3%



			2025	
NORTHLAND	NEW:	189	165	▲ 14.5%
	USED:	146	116	▲ 25.9%
AUCKLAND	NEW:	5,143	4,176	▲ 23.2%
	USED:	3,945	3,685	▲ 7.1%
BAY OF PLENTY	NEW:	447	374	▲ 19.5%
	USED:	419	340	▲ 23.2%
WAIKATO	NEW:	688	662	▲ 3.9%
	USED:	712	703	▲ 1.3%
GISBORNE	NEW:	39	35	▲ 11.4%
	USED:	47	53	▼ 11.3%
TARANAKI	NEW:	136	122	▲ 11.5%
	USED:	113	102	▲ 10.8%
HAWKE'S BAY	NEW:	209	213	▼ 1.9%
	USED:	116	136	▼ 14.7%
TASMAN	NEW:	34	34	■ 0.0%
	USED:	55	54	▲ 1.9%
MANAWATU-WHANGANUI	NEW:	276	297	▼ 7.1%
	USED:	195	198	▼ 1.5%
NELSON	NEW:	36	22	▲ 63.6%
	USED:	89	70	▲ 27.1%
WELLINGTON	NEW:	566	645	▼ 12.2%
	USED:	618	518	▲ 19.3%
WEST COAST	NEW:	21	26	▼ 19.2%
	USED:	36	20	▲ 80.0%
MARLBOROUGH	NEW:	50	37	▲ 35.1%
	USED:	45	39	▲ 15.4%
CANTERBURY	NEW:	937	903	▲ 3.8%
	USED:	1,191	1,056	▲ 12.8%
OTAGO	NEW:	247	274	▼ 9.9%
	USED:	307	271	▲ 13.3%
SOUTHLAND	NEW:	113	92	▲ 22.8%
	USED:	91	89	▲ 2.2%
OTHERS (Chatham Islands, overseas, unknown)	NEW:	6	11	▼ 45.5%
	USED:	31	15	▲ 106.7%

infoagent
NO.1 VEHICLE DATA SERVICE IN AUS & NZ

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - August 2026

MAKE	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	3,127	2,827	10.6%	38.3%	21,584	35.7%
Nissan	1,248	993	25.7%	15.3%	9,576	15.8%
Mazda	998	1,097	-9.0%	12.2%	7,594	12.6%
Subaru	770	587	31.2%	9.4%	5,602	9.3%
Honda	641	675	-5.0%	7.9%	4,983	8.2%
BMW	246	259	-5.0%	3.0%	1,983	3.3%
Lexus	216	123	75.6%	2.6%	1,447	2.4%
Suzuki	178	182	-2.2%	2.2%	1,427	2.4%
Mitsubishi	142	126	12.7%	1.7%	1,068	1.8%
Mercedes-Benz	125	151	-17.2%	1.5%	1,157	1.9%
Audi	112	122	-8.2%	1.4%	1,026	1.7%
Land Rover	59	44	34.1%	0.7%	469	0.8%
Volkswagen	52	97	-46.4%	0.6%	491	0.8%
Tesla	50	20	150.0%	0.6%	403	0.7%
Mini	30	13	130.8%	0.4%	211	0.3%
BYD	20	3	566.7%	0.2%	104	0.2%
Ford	16	23	-30.4%	0.2%	165	0.3%
Porsche	14	11	27.3%	0.2%	117	0.2%
Jeep	14	12	16.7%	0.2%	133	0.2%
Hyundai	13	6	116.7%	0.2%	79	0.1%
Jaguar	11	19	-42.1%	0.1%	169	0.3%
Volvo	8	17	-52.9%	0.1%	148	0.2%
Peugeot	8	5	60.0%	0.1%	60	0.1%
Chevrolet	8	14	-42.9%	0.1%	61	0.1%
MG	7	4	75.0%	0.1%	23	0.0%
LDV	5	1	400.0%	0.1%	21	0.0%
Fiat	3	0	300.0%	0.0%	11	0.0%
Daihatsu	3	3	0.0%	0.0%	23	0.0%
Chrysler	3	3	0.0%	0.0%	39	0.1%
McLaren	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	10	0.0%
Kia	2	3	-33.3%	0.0%	34	0.1%
Holden	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	28	0.0%
Dodge	2	4	-50.0%	0.0%	33	0.1%
Aston Martin	2	1	100.0%	0.0%	12	0.0%
Alfa Romeo	2	1	100.0%	0.0%	17	0.0%
Others	17	19	-10.5%	0.2%	199	0.3%
Total	**8,156**	**7,465**	**9.3%**	**100.0%**	**60,507**	**100.0%**

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - August 2026

MAKE	MODEL	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Aqua	877	817	7.3%	10.8%	5,740	9.5%
Toyota	Prius	494	562	-12.1%	6.1%	3,692	6.1%
Nissan	Note	410	324	26.5%	5.0%	2,999	5.0%
Toyota	Corolla	361	385	-6.2%	4.4%	2,869	4.7%
Subaru	Impreza	255	227	12.3%	3.1%	1,890	3.1%
Mazda	Axela	230	308	-25.3%	2.8%	1,834	3.0%
Toyota	C-HR	222	273	-18.7%	2.7%	1,768	2.9%
Nissan	Serena	220	176	25.0%	2.7%	1,550	2.6%
Nissan	Leaf	212	120	76.7%	2.6%	1,773	2.9%
Mazda	Demio	209	206	1.5%	2.6%	1,628	2.7%
Honda	Fit	205	280	-26.8%	2.5%	1,727	2.9%
Subaru	XV	198	153	29.4%	2.4%	1,480	2.4%
Mazda	CX-5	197	195	1.0%	2.4%	1,396	2.3%
Toyota	Yaris	186	85	118.8%	2.3%	1,021	1.7%
Nissan	X-Trail	163	168	-3.0%	2.0%	1,484	2.5%
Honda	Vezel	157	164	-4.3%	1.9%	1,142	1.9%
Toyota	Vellfire	134	76	76.3%	1.6%	823	1.4%
Suzuki	Swift	121	124	-2.4%	1.5%	975	1.6%
Subaru	Levorg	95	41	131.7%	1.2%	573	0.9%
Toyota	RAV4	88	37	137.8%	1.1%	341	0.6%
Toyota	Alphard	84	38	121.1%	1.0%	590	1.0%
Toyota	Camry	81	75	8.0%	1.0%	449	0.7%
Mazda	Atenza	77	73	5.5%	0.9%	581	1.0%
Mazda	Premacy	75	70	7.1%	0.9%	535	0.9%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	74	84	-11.9%	0.9%	628	1.0%
Toyota	Yaris Cross	63	20	215.0%	0.8%	330	0.5%
Subaru	Legacy	61	44	38.6%	0.7%	472	0.8%
Honda	Odyssey	56	37	51.4%	0.7%	377	0.6%
Subaru	Outback	51	42	21.4%	0.6%	351	0.6%
Toyota	Vitz	50	61	-18.0%	0.6%	409	0.7%
BMW	Mini	50	48	4.2%	0.6%	414	0.7%
Mazda	CX-3	49	54	-9.3%	0.6%	354	0.6%
Toyota	Spade	48	39	23.1%	0.6%	345	0.6%
Nissan	Kicks	47	6	683.3%	0.6%	293	0.5%
Subaru	Forester	44	35	25.7%	0.5%	387	0.6%
Others		2,212	2,018	9.6%	27.1%	17,287	28.6%
Total		**8,156**	**7,465**	**9.3%**	**100.0%**	**60,507**	**100.0%**

'Maintaining confidence' in system

Sixteen driver testing officers (DTOs) have been suspended and seven stood down with hundreds of motorists having to resit their practicals.

The action comes as part of an NZTA investigation into "abnormal test results" after concerns were raised about some DTOs.

Mike Hargreaves, director of land transport, says the agency has been investigating since October 2025, and some practical tests for passenger and heavy-vehicle endorsements may not have been completed properly or to the required standard.

"This action is about ensuring the safety of road users and maintaining confidence in the system," he says. "When we can't rely on a test result, we need to confirm the driver meets the required standard for their licence class. Retesting is the most effective way to do that.

"The vast majority of practical tests are conducted appropriately every day. This action relates to a small number of testing officers, but highlights the important role testing plays in helping ensure drivers have demonstrated skills and knowledge."

Hargreaves adds testing by providers is carefully monitored and are conducted properly, but "when we identify concerns, we will act".

The NZTA is also considering action in relation to some ex-DTOs, while about 650 drivers will need to resit their tests over the next six months.

The number of motorists affected may increase, and the agency is working with VTNZ to maintain testing capacity and minimise disruption.

The probe comes after five officers at the company's branch in Highbrook, east Auckland, were dismissed last year and had their testing-officer endorsements suspended amid allegations of accepting payments to pass people taking practicals.

RULES FOR CHARGERS

The government has removed what it describes as "unnecessary consenting barriers" to EV charging infrastructure, making it faster and easier to install them.

Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, says amendments to the National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities (NES-ETA) introduce nationally consistent permitted activity standards for EV chargers.

"By setting clear national rules, we're making it much quicker and easier to get chargers in the ground while still managing effects appropriately. The NES-ETA now explicitly includes EV charging infrastructure with permitted activity rules covering the full lifecycle from construction through to operation, upgrade and replacement."

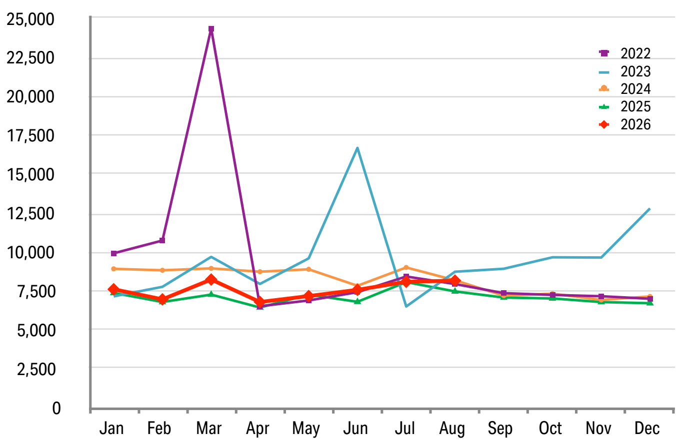
The amendments apply to private chargers, facilities in transport corridors, chargers associated with other infrastructure or buildings, such as service stations, and standalone charging facilities including hubs.

Bishop announced in March plans to get 2,574 new charge points installed nationwide as part of a co-investment scheme with ChargeNet and Meridian.

Rise of 9.3%

There were 8,156 used-imported passenger vehicles registered last month for a year-on-year increase of 9.3 per cent from 7,465.
The Toyota Aqua topped the ladder with 877 sales for a 10.8 share of the market. Next up was the Prius with 494.
Nissan's Note claimed third with 410 registrations, Toyota's Corolla was fourth on 361 and Subaru's Impreza was fifth with 255.

Used Imported Passenger Registrations - 2022–2026



Used Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - August 2026

MAKE	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	316	159	98.7%	3.9%	2,616	4.3%
Plug-in hybrid electric	104	63	65.1%	1.3%	651	1.1%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	4,124	3,761	9.7%	50.6%	29,569	48.9%
Petrol	3,491	3,364	3.8%	42.8%	26,668	44.1%
Diesel	121	117	3.4%	1.5%	1,002	1.7%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	1	-100.0%	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	**8,156**	**7,465**	**9.3%**		**60,507**	

Port notches up record profits

The number of cars handled by Lyttelton Port Company totalled 39,138 for the 12-month period to June 30, an increase of 11 per cent from 35,233 in the previous fiscal year.

The company has also posted a record net profit after tax of $35 million for 2025/26, which was up by 40 per cent from $25m. The result was underpinned by revenue of $226m, up by nine per cent.

Chairman Barry Bragg says the past financial year showed the value of a disciplined focus on performance.

"This is a result our people can be proud of," he adds. "It wouldn't have been possible without the support of staff and customers.

"Our job now is to keep lifting returns so we can reinvest in the port, support its long-term growth and become the South Island's port hub.

"The board is determined to make real gains in health and safety. Our plan spans stronger leadership, better work practices and asset upgrades."

Container volumes for the year held steady at 427,462 twenty-foot equivalent units, down less than one per cent on 431,556 handled in 2024/25.

General cargo was positive with grain, fertiliser and stockfeed volumes strong on the back of favourable conditions in agriculture.


Lyttelton Port is on track to deliver a full-year dividend of $14.5m

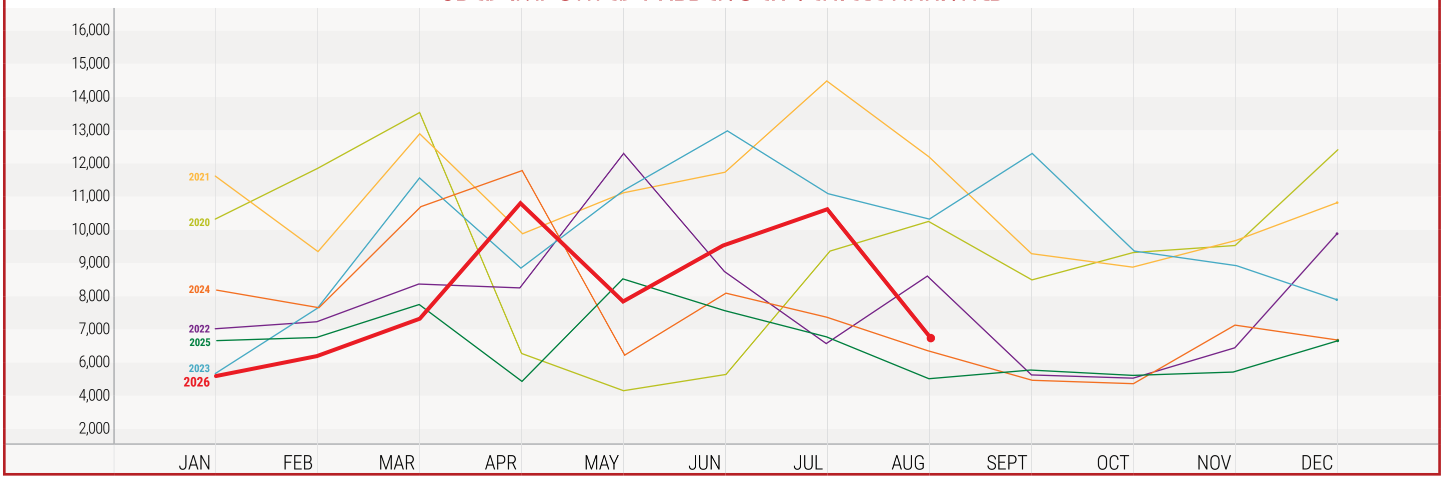
Total bulk trades climbed by nine per cent to 3,830,379 tonnes, which included the increase in car volumes as well as dry bulk climbing by 19 per cent, coal going up by 14 per cent and bulk fuel rising three per cent.

Log exports were down 17 per cent, held back by high shipping costs that led to cargo being stockpiled or despatched to the domestic market.

DIP IN USED IMPORTS

Some 6,746 used cars were imported during August. It was the third lowest month of 2026 and took the year-to-date total to 63,691. There were 6,560 arrivals from Japan, 135 from Australia, 19 from the US and 12 from Singapore.

USED IMPORTED PASSENGER VEHICLE ARRIVALS



Used Imported Passenger Vehicles By Country Of Export

COUNTRY OF EXPORT	2026										2025		2024	
	JAN '26	FEB '26	MAR '26	APR '26	MAY '26	JUN '26	JUL '26	AUG '26	AUG MRKT %	2026 TOTAL	2025 TOTAL	MARKET %	2024 TOTAL	MARKET %
Australia	89	156	193	367	131	149	149	135	2.0%	**1,369**	1,599	2.1%	1,285	1.5%
Great Britain	17	14	13	8	13	12	8	8	0.1%	**93**	334	0.4%	255	0.3%
Japan	4,966	5,860	7,108	10,078	7,608	9,307	10,375	6,560	97.2%	**61,862**	74,956	96.8%	86,040	97.5%
Singapore	27	8	9	18	29	25	23	12	0.2%	**151**	173	0.2%	256	0.3%
USA	28	13	19	8	12	9	15	19	0.3%	**123**	204	0.3%	249	0.3%
Other countries	9	8	11	8	8	25	12	12	0.2%	**93**	143	0.2%	170	0.2%
Total	**5,136**	**6,059**	**7,353**	**10,487**	**7,801**	**9,527**	**10,582**	**6,746**	**100.0%**	**63,691**	**77,409**	**100%**	**88,255**	**100.0%**

Action needed to tackle crime

The Motor Trade Association (MTA) wants the government to support the setting up of an industry and police fuel-retail crime group.

It says fuel theft and associated offending create risks with staff safety, major financial costs and undermines the viability of small retailers.

The MTA describes engagement between the fuel sector, police and government to date as being "ad hoc and dependent on political will rather than a standing structure".

In 2025, there were 28,095 instances of theft reported to police and the association contends this figure understates the true number as many such crimes go unreported.

A small, industry-recognised fuel-retail crime group, to be convened by the MTA and fuel-sector representatives, is seen as a way forward.

There would need to be a commitment from political parties to support it, and provide regular, structured engagement with the Minister of Police and senior police representatives.

"Fuel theft is linked to broader offending, including vehicle theft, burglary and organised crime," says the MTA. "Despite this, it isn't consistently prioritised in policing and the most common complaint from retailers is reported incidents aren't followed up.

"This discourages reporting, erodes deterrence, encourages repeat offending and undermines retailer confidence in the system."

The MTA, in its pre-election manifesto, wants the next Minister of Police's letter of expectations to the Police Commissioner to identify fuel-retail crime as a focus area.

In addition, the association is lobbying for 100 per cent tax deductibility on crime-prevention capital expenditure because small retailers face disproportionate costs to invest in prevention measures that reduce harm, such as bollards, security film, automatic number plate recognition cameras, fog cannons and staff-protection measures.

The MTA would also like to see a capped fund created specifically to assist small to medium-sized businesses when buying approved crime-prevention technology.

SLIGHT DROP IN TRADE

There were 16,350 second-hand cars sold by dealers to the public during August for a 2.2 per cent dip from 16,725 in the same month of last year.

SECONDHAND CAR SALES - August 2026

	DEALER TO PUBLIC				PUBLIC TO PUBLIC			PUBLIC TO DEALER		
REGION	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/- %	MARKET SHARE	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/- %	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/- %
Northland	534	598	-10.7%	3.3%	1,779	2,086	-14.7%	177	206	-14.1%
Auckland	5,436	5,585	-2.7%	33.2%	12,738	14,362	-11.3%	5,892	6,317	-6.7%
Waikato	1,689	1,844	-8.4%	10.3%	3,955	4,307	-8.2%	1,149	1,211	-5.1%
Bay of Plenty	1,162	1,145	1.5%	7.1%	2,618	2,947	-11.2%	703	628	11.9%
Gisborne	113	134	-15.7%	0.7%	302	322	-6.2%	30	56	-46.4%
Hawke's Bay	548	605	-9.4%	3.4%	1,320	1,463	-9.8%	470	440	6.8%
Taranaki	324	375	-13.6%	2.0%	1,044	1,227	-14.9%	167	190	-12.1%
Manawatu-Whanganui	911	843	8.1%	5.6%	2,052	2,343	-12.4%	804	812	-1.0%
Wellington	1,482	1,512	-2.0%	9.1%	3,084	3,243	-4.9%	1,035	1,101	-6.0%
Tasman	144	156	-7.7%	0.9%	457	587	-22.1%	28	9	211.1%
Nelson	121	141	-14.2%	0.7%	399	461	-13.4%	133	167	-20.4%
Marlborough	139	127	9.4%	0.9%	325	381	-14.7%	76	70	8.6%
West Coast	116	82	41.5%	0.7%	306	303	1.0%	47	19	147.4%
Canterbury	2,470	2,407	2.6%	15.1%	5,629	5,953	-5.4%	2,195	2,037	7.8%
Otago	794	789	0.6%	4.9%	1,897	2,204	-13.9%	440	455	-3.3%
Southland	321	338	-5.0%	2.0%	993	1,075	-7.6%	139	173	-19.7%
Other	46	44	4.5%	0.3%	130	133	-2.3%	11	0	0.0%
NZ Total	**16,350**	**16,725**	**-2.2%**	**100.0%**	**39,028**	**43,397**	**-10.1%**	**13,496**	**13,891**	**-2.8%**

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New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - August 2026

MAKE	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	2,387	1,983	20.4%	26.1%	12,801	18.5%
Mitsubishi	917	867	5.8%	10.0%	5,606	8.1%
Kia	860	775	11.0%	9.4%	6,104	8.8%
Mazda	460	513	-10.3%	5.0%	2,712	3.9%
GWM	351	265	32.5%	3.8%	3,018	4.4%
Suzuki	346	344	0.6%	3.8%	2,965	4.3%
MG	344	328	4.9%	3.8%	3,340	4.8%
BYD	336	62	441.9%	3.7%	3,551	5.1%
Honda	294	244	20.5%	3.2%	2,220	3.2%
Ford	266	530	-49.8%	2.9%	2,587	3.7%
Chery	245	101	142.6%	2.7%	1,770	2.6%
Audi	177	130	36.2%	1.9%	999	1.4%
BMW	170	175	-2.9%	1.9%	1,215	1.8%
Jaecoo	167	68	145.6%	1.8%	1,211	1.7%
Subaru	162	166	-2.4%	1.8%	1,377	2.0%
Hyundai	160	342	-53.2%	1.8%	2,380	3.4%
Lexus	121	116	4.3%	1.3%	984	1.4%
Volkswagen	113	101	11.9%	1.2%	974	1.4%
Land Rover	108	91	18.7%	1.2%	826	1.2%
Geely	102	5	1,940.0%	1.1%	590	0.9%
Mercedes-Benz	99	100	-1.0%	1.1%	916	1.3%
Nissan	97	153	-36.6%	1.1%	1,121	1.6%
Mini	95	52	82.7%	1.0%	664	1.0%
Tesla	88	77	14.3%	1.0%	2,605	3.8%
BAIC	62	0	6,200.0%	0.7%	512	0.7%
Leapmotor	61	34	79.4%	0.7%	412	0.6%
Dongfeng	61	0	6,100.0%	0.7%	920	1.3%
Skoda	58	66	-12.1%	0.6%	526	0.8%
Mahindra	44	39	12.8%	0.5%	293	0.4%
Omoda	38	66	-42.4%	0.4%	506	0.7%
GAC	36	0	3,600.0%	0.4%	372	0.5%
Denza	35	0	3,500.0%	0.4%	284	0.4%
Porsche	33	43	-23.3%	0.4%	353	0.5%
Zeekr	32	0	3,200.0%	0.4%	464	0.7%
Volvo	31	48	-35.4%	0.3%	411	0.6%
Others	181	204	-11.3%	2.0%	1,635	2.4%
Total	**9,137**	**8,088**	**13.0%**	**100.0%**	**69,224**	**100.0%**

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - August 2026

MAKE	MODEL	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	RAV4	886	1,038	-14.6%	9.7%	4,801	6.9%
Toyota	Corolla Cross	597	141	323.4%	6.5%	2,393	3.5%
Mitsubishi	ASX	475	396	19.9%	5.2%	2,461	3.6%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	386	352	9.7%	4.2%	2,109	3.0%
Toyota	Land Cruiser Prado	243	128	89.8%	2.7%	919	1.3%
Ford	Everest	223	411	-45.7%	2.4%	1,869	2.7%
Toyota	Yaris Cross	222	181	22.7%	2.4%	1,174	1.7%
Kia	Stonic	218	122	78.7%	2.4%	1,127	1.6%
Mazda	CX-5	216	130	66.2%	2.4%	965	1.4%
Kia	Seltos	191	313	-39.0%	2.1%	1,371	2.0%
Kia	Sportage	186	94	97.9%	2.0%	1,785	2.6%
GWM	Haval H6	184	151	21.9%	2.0%	1,706	2.5%
Kia	Carnival	153	69	121.7%	1.7%	452	0.7%
Toyota	Corolla	142	167	-15.0%	1.6%	1,121	1.6%
MG	ZS	137	160	-14.4%	1.5%	1,446	2.1%
Chery	Tiggo 4 Pro	132	76	73.7%	1.4%	880	1.3%
Mazda	CX-30	130	83	56.6%	1.4%	490	0.7%
Suzuki	Swift	112	131	-14.5%	1.2%	1,086	1.6%
Suzuki	Jimny	108	60	80.0%	1.2%	753	1.1%
BYD	Atto 3	107	21	409.5%	1.2%	716	1.0%
Subaru	Outback	95	70	35.7%	1.0%	639	0.9%
Suzuki	Fronx	93	94	-1.1%	1.0%	558	0.8%
Jaecoo	J7	87	68	27.9%	1.0%	695	1.0%
Honda	ZR-V	86	91	-5.5%	0.9%	475	0.7%
Kia	Sorento	86	83	3.6%	0.9%	362	0.5%
Tesla	Model Y	81	68	19.1%	0.9%	2,392	3.5%
Jaecoo	J5	80	0	8,000.0%	0.9%	516	0.7%
Hyundai	Tucson	77	150	-48.7%	0.8%	1,459	2.1%
Nissan	X-Trail	70	95	-26.3%	0.8%	877	1.3%
Audi	S5	70	21	233.3%	0.8%	349	0.5%
Toyota	Yaris	68	60	13.3%	0.7%	721	1.0%
Audi	Q7	66	21	214.3%	0.7%	118	0.2%
Honda	Jazz	65	52	25.0%	0.7%	602	0.9%
Land Rover	Defender	64	34	88.2%	0.7%	376	0.5%
GWM	Haval Jolion	58	69	-15.9%	0.6%	631	0.9%
Others		2,943	2,888	1.9%	32.2%	28,830	41.6%
Total		**9,137**	**8,088**	**13.0%**	**100.0%**	**69,224**	**100.0%**

Blue oval gets behind franchise

Ford NZ has teamed up with Auckland FC to become the club's official vehicle partner and extend its support of the sport nationwide.

Under the deal, the company is supplying the A-League franchise with a fleet to assist day-to-day operations on and off the field.

"We see ourselves as the driving force behind New Zealand sport, not just a logo but embedded in how these organisations operate," says Mathew Slade, Ford NZ's marketing director.

"With Auckland FC, that comes through literally. Our vehicles are moving the team and gear, and we're showing up at the ground and in the community."

Nick Becker, chief executive of Auckland FC, says: "Partnering with a company like Ford that shares the same goals and that's strongly ingrained with football in New Zealand was a no-brainer."

Sales spike

Some 9,137 new cars were registered during August, up by 13 per cent from 8,088 in the same month of last year.

Toyota's RAV4 was the bestselling model with 886 units and a market share of 9.7 per cent. Next up was the Corolla Cross on 597. It was followed by Mitsubishi's ASX and Outlander on 475 and 386 respectively. Another Toyota, the Land Cruiser Prado, completed the top five with 243 sales.


The VW Tiguan

PROFITABILITY DRIVE

The Volkswagen Group plans to cut product complexity by as much as 75 per cent and reduce its global line-up by around 50 per cent by 2030.

Reducing the number of powertrains, trims and specifications is viewed by chief executive Oliver Blume as a fast way to lower costs and lift margin back towards its long-term target of eight to 10 per cent.

The company has yet to identify which vehicles it's reviewing, but the strategy points to a gradual withdrawal of low-volume niche products, overlapping models and expensive derivatives.

Future investment is expected to centre on big VW sellers such as the Golf, Tiguan, T-Roc and Passat, and its important EVs. Touran production has ended, while Audi has phased out its A1 and Q2.

Cupra is one of the group's fastest growing brands and Skoda appears less likely to face cuts, but Seat has been dropping off. The focus at Porsche is expected to fall on its many variants more than model families.

The VW Group wants to reduce complexity rather than canning nameplates. Costs associated with vehicle programmes increasingly stem from the proliferation of engines, batteries, software versions, driver-assistance systems, interior configurations and extras.

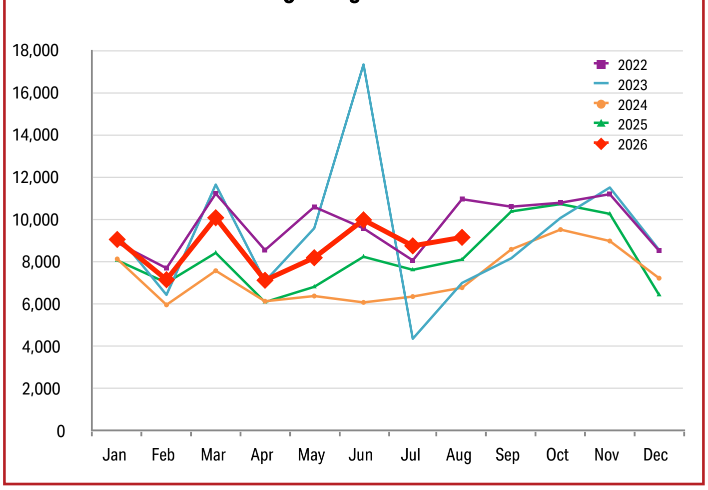
CALLING TIME WITH KIA

The Giltrap Group is ending its representation of Kia on Auckland's North Shore next month.

The decision reflects a change of strategy for Giltrap amid the "continued evolution" of the car market and follows a 17-year relationship between the two companies.

Kia North Shore will operate as a dealer for the marque until October 15, providing ongoing vehicle sales, servicing and customer support, warranties and service plans.

New Passenger Registrations - 2022–2026



New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - August 2026

MAKE	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	1,049	383	173.9%	11.5%	11,768	17.0%
Plug-in hybrid electric	1,174	432	171.8%	12.8%	7,717	11.1%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	3,442	3,285	4.8%	37.7%	24,264	35.1%
Petrol	2,889	3,118	-7.3%	31.6%	21,048	30.4%
Diesel	583	870	-33.0%	6.4%	4,427	6.4%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**9,137**	**8,088**	**13.0%**		**69,224**	

Motive Power Development

Market Shift

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Motor Industry Association

Business aiming to 'bounce back'

A dealership specialising in recreational vehicles (RVs) is closing its sales yard and shifting to a smaller site in response to tough trading conditions.

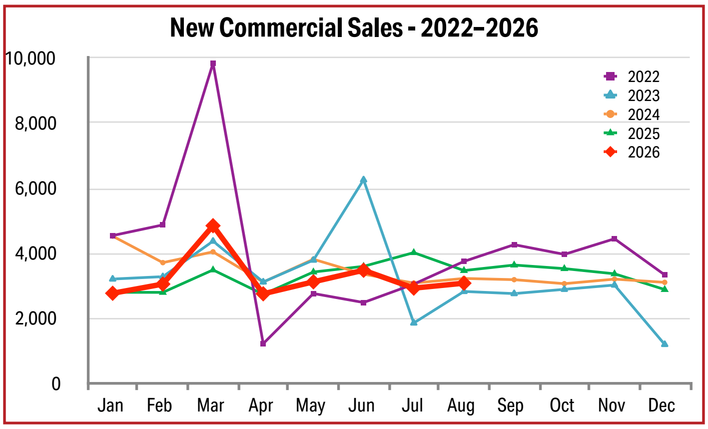
RV Mega in Mount Maunganui has announced it's also cutting staff numbers as it downsizes until economic conditions in New Zealand recover.

Owner Richard Olsen says the business will move from its leased site in Hewletts Road to a smaller location as it continues its workshop and retail operations with reduced vehicle sales.

He explains the cost-of-living crisis, higher fuel prices, tariffs and lower visitor numbers to Mount Maunganui last summer after a fatal landslide have created three challenging years for the company.

"Unfortunately, I've had to make quite a few of my staff redundant, which is never a nice thing to go through, for them or me," he adds.

Olsen, who says motorhomes and caravans have been his passion for more than a decade, purchased RV Mega in June 2020 after a career in supermarket management.



He's cautiously optimistic about the future and hopes cutting overheads now means the dealership can "bounce back" when the market improves.

The NZ Motor Caravan Association says the industry is having to adjust after the uptick experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic has cooled significantly.

ELECTRIC PRICE PARITY

Farizon NZ says it's notching up strong sales of its V7E.

During the first half of 2026, it secured a 44 per cent share of the fully electric van segment, which it adds was more than any other such vehicle on the market.

Brand manager Kevin Richard

New Commercial Sales by Make - August 2026

MAKE	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	1,115	971	14.8%	36.2%	7,239	27.9%
Ford	633	1,113	-43.1%	20.6%	6,973	26.8%
Mitsubishi	337	262	28.6%	10.9%	2,602	10.0%
LDV	115	114	0.9%	3.7%	582	2.2%
Isuzu	109	160	-31.9%	3.5%	1,162	4.5%
Mercedes-Benz	104	176	-40.9%	3.4%	421	1.6%
BYD	93	48	93.8%	3.0%	1,117	4.3%
Nissan	59	145	-59.3%	1.9%	1,419	5.5%
Scania	44	33	33.3%	1.4%	271	1.0%
Fuso	40	50	-20.0%	1.3%	302	1.2%
Geely	39	3	1,200.0%	1.3%	182	0.7%
GWM	35	32	9.4%	1.1%	433	1.7%
Kia	32	108	-70.4%	1.0%	389	1.5%
Hino	31	38	-18.4%	1.0%	305	1.2%
Iveco	27	75	-64.0%	0.9%	170	0.7%
Volkswagen	25	33	-24.2%	0.8%	256	1.0%
Farizon	25	2	1,150.0%	0.8%	117	0.5%
Ram	21	15	40.0%	0.7%	128	0.5%
Foton	21	10	110.0%	0.7%	107	0.4%
Fiat	21	26	-19.2%	0.7%	234	0.9%
Others	153	207	-26.1%	5.0%	1,562	6.0%
Total	**3,079**	**3,621**	**-15.0%**	**100.0%**	**25,971**	**100.0%**

New Commercial Sales by Model - August 2026

MAKE	MODEL	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hilux	890	743	19.8%	28.9%	5,161	19.9%
Ford	Ranger	571	976	-41.5%	18.5%	6,223	24.0%
Mitsubishi	Triton	337	262	28.6%	10.9%	2,602	10.0%
Toyota	Hiace	194	181	7.2%	6.3%	1,878	7.2%
Mercedes-Benz	Sprinter	99	160	-38.1%	3.2%	341	1.3%
BYD	Shark 6	93	48	93.8%	3.0%	1,117	4.3%
LDV	Deliver 9	73	24	204.2%	2.4%	335	1.3%
Isuzu	D-Max	71	92	-22.8%	2.3%	763	2.9%
Nissan	Navara	59	145	-59.3%	1.9%	1,419	5.5%
Ford	Transit	56	137	-59.1%	1.8%	697	2.7%
GWM	Cannon	35	32	9.4%	1.1%	433	1.7%
Kia	Tasman	32	108	-70.4%	1.0%	359	1.4%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	31	47	-34.0%	1.0%	200	0.8%
Geely	C12e	26	0	2,600.0%	0.8%	26	0.1%
Isuzu	F Series	25	22	13.6%	0.8%	175	0.7%
Farizon	V7E	21	0	2,100.0%	0.7%	97	0.4%
LDV	Deliver 7	19	6	216.7%	0.6%	73	0.3%
Iveco	Daily	18	66	-72.7%	0.6%	110	0.4%
Ram	1500	17	14	21.4%	0.6%	91	0.4%
Fiat	Ducato	16	26	-38.5%	0.5%	215	0.8%
Others		396	532	-25.6%	12.9%	3,656	14.1%
Total		**3,079**	**3,621**	**-15.0%**	**100.0%**	**25,971**	**100.0%**

believes the result reflects growing confidence in the marque and the case for electric commercials.

"These numbers speak for themselves," he says. "It's the market telling us the V7E is the van that fleet operators want. Buyers are seeing they no longer have to trade off practicality or price to go electric, and that confidence is translating directly into sales."

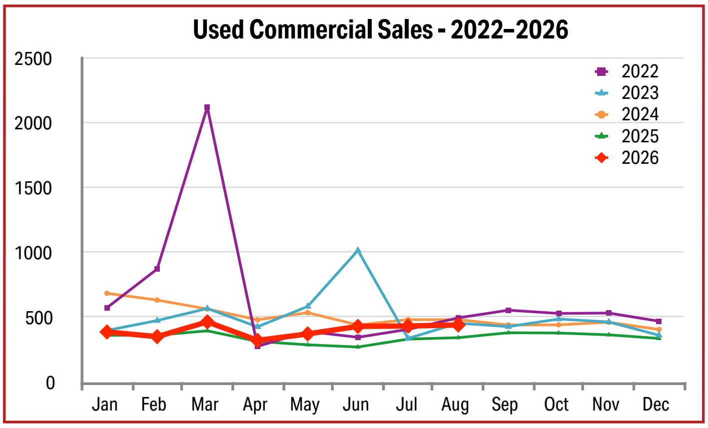
The marque is distributed here by a division of Giltrap, the NordEast Group. Managing director Dane Fisher says the sales performance validates the price-parity strategy behind the V7E's launch earlier this year.

"We said from day one that electrification needs to be accessible, not aspirational, and the market has responded," he adds. "When you remove the price barrier, businesses are ready to switch. This is only the beginning for Farizon in New Zealand."

Launched on our shores in April, the V7E is priced from $55,990 plus on-road costs. It offers up to 329km of WLTP driving range from its 67kWh battery, seven cubic metres of cargo capacity and a payload of up to 1,243kg.

DC fast-charging takes the battery from 20-80 per cent in around 30 minutes, minimising downtime for busy fleets.

The EV is backed by a five-year or 200,000km vehicle warranty, an eight-year or 200,000km battery warranty and 12-month to 20,000km service intervals "to give fleet operators certainty" over total cost of ownership.



NEW DOWN, USED UP

There were 3,079 new commercial vehicles sold last month for a year-on-year decrease of 15 per cent from 3,621.

Toyota's Hilux was the top model with 890 sales and a 28.9 per cent share of the market.

Ford's Ranger was second on 571 and Mitsubishi's Triton was third with 337. Their market shares were 18.5 and 10.9 per cent.

The top five was completed by Toyota's Hiace on 194 and the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter with 99.

The Farizon V7E, meanwhile, notched up 21 sales for a 0.7 per cent share of the overall new commercial market. Its year-to-date total is now 97.

There were 443 used-imported commercials registered last month, which was up by 28.4 per cent from 345 in August 2025.

Used Commercial Sales by Make - August 2026

MAKE	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	251	147	70.7%	56.7%	1,608	50.0%
Nissan	54	69	-21.7%	12.2%	523	16.3%
Isuzu	22	15	46.7%	5.0%	137	4.3%
Ford	20	20	0.0%	4.5%	164	5.1%
Hino	17	21	-19.0%	3.8%	143	4.4%
Daihatsu	14	10	40.0%	3.2%	84	2.6%
Volkswagen	13	3	333.3%	2.9%	49	1.5%
Suzuki	9	4	125.0%	2.0%	68	2.1%
LDV	9	14	-35.7%	2.0%	146	4.5%
Mitsubishi	8	28	-71.4%	1.8%	83	2.6%
Mazda	8	1	700.0%	1.8%	42	1.3%
Chevrolet	6	1	500.0%	1.4%	31	1.0%
Fiat	3	0	300.0%	0.7%	19	0.6%
UD Trucks	2	2	0.0%	0.5%	12	0.4%
Honda	2	1	100.0%	0.5%	6	0.2%
Ram	1	0	100.0%	0.2%	5	0.2%
Mercedes-Benz	1	1	0.0%	0.2%	21	0.7%
Fuso	1	1	0.0%	0.2%	3	0.1%
Cadillac	1	0	100.0%	0.2%	1	0.0%
Bedford	1	0	100.0%	0.2%	1	0.0%
Others	0	7	-100.0%	0.0%	69	2.1%
Total	**443**	**345**	**28.4%**	**100.0%**	**3,215**	**100.0%**

Used Commercial Sales by Model - August 2026

MAKE	MODEL	AUG '26	AUG '25	+/-%	AUG '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hiace	216	114	89.5%	48.8%	1,345	41.8%
Nissan	NV200	21	30	-30.0%	4.7%	174	5.4%
Daihatsu	Hijet	14	10	40.0%	3.2%	84	2.6%
Nissan	Caravan	14	13	7.7%	3.2%	110	3.4%
Toyota	Regius	12	5	140.0%	2.7%	67	2.1%
Ford	Ranger	12	10	20.0%	2.7%	102	3.2%
Isuzu	Elf	11	13	-15.4%	2.5%	73	2.3%
Nissan	NV350	9	18	-50.0%	2.0%	118	3.7%
Suzuki	Carry	9	4	125.0%	2.0%	66	2.1%
Isuzu	Forward	8	0	800.0%	1.8%	33	1.0%
Toyota	Dyna	8	14	-42.9%	1.8%	67	2.1%
Hino	Dutro	8	16	-50.0%	1.8%	105	3.3%
Volkswagen	Transporter	7	1	600.0%	1.6%	18	0.6%
LDV	T60	7	12	-41.7%	1.6%	106	3.3%
Hino	Ranger	7	4	75.0%	1.6%	33	1.0%
Toyota	Hilux	7	4	75.0%	1.6%	71	2.2%
Fuso	Canter	7	14	-50.0%	1.6%	55	1.7%
Toyota	Toyoace	6	8	-25.0%	1.4%	38	1.2%
Mazda	BT-50	6	0	600.0%	1.4%	26	0.8%
Volkswagen	Amarok	5	1	400.0%	1.1%	23	0.7%
Others		49	54	-9.3%	11.1%	501	15.6%
Total		**443**	**345**	**28.4%**	**100.0%**	**3,215**	**100.0%**

Value of electric imports jump

The value of passenger vehicle imports totalled $6.1 billion for the 12 months to the end of June, which was up by $1.1b and 23 per cent from the previous year, reports Stats NZ.

Over the same period, the value of reduced-emissions imports – including battery electric vehicles (BEVs), hybrids and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) – increased by 33 per cent to $2.9b.

Internal combustion engine (ICE) importations, including those powered by diesel or petrol, rose by 16 per cent to $3.1b.

Stats NZ says while the value of ICEs imported remained higher than that of vehicles with lower emissions, the difference has narrowed over time.

In the latest 12-month spell, ICE vehicles crossing the border were valued at $202 million more than reduced-emissions alternatives as opposed to $4.5b more in the year ended June 2019.

"Reduced-emissions vehicles accounted for 48 per cent of the total value of all passenger vehicles imported in the year ended June 2026," says Shanna Dilworth, Stats NZ's international accounts spokesperson. "Nearly one-in-three passenger imports were hybrid electric vehicles."

The import figures show all categories of low-emissions vehicles increased their value over the past year.

The value of hybrids, which accounted for 58 per cent of the total of reduced-emissions vehicles brought in, climbed by 7.9 per cent to $1.7b.

Meanwhile, BEVs jumped by 105 per cent to $810m and PHEVs increased by some 76 per cent to $413 million.

Japan was the main source of reduced-emissions imports in the June 2026 year, taking out 44 per cent of the sector at a value of $1.28b. Next was China with 30 per cent and $877m, and South Korea on 8.6 per cent and $251m.

China was the main provider of BEVs. It accounted for 73 per cent of such imports while Japan supplied 63 per cent of hybrids.

The value of imported vehicles, parts and accessories totalled $935m in June for a rise of $97m or 11.5 per cent when compared with the same month in 2025.

The biggest jump in this category during June was those from China, which rose by $116m. Such imports from across the Tasman climbed in value by $19m and those from South Korea went up by $14m. In contrast, the value of imports for the same category from the EU fell by $14m month-on-month.

The data also shows the automotive category recorded an increase in value for the three months ending June 2026, rising by 20.4 per cent from the same period a year earlier to hit $2.64b.

The tally for the 12 months to the end of June was also up, climbing 16.4 per cent from $8.29b a year ago to $9.65b.

CRITERIA PUT TO TEST

The BMW iX3 is the first car to achieve a five-star safety rating after being assessed against ANCAP's latest criteria.

The test and rating requirements are updated every three years to reflect industry advancements, changing crash

Imports vs sales – new passenger vehicles

	CAR SALES IMPORTED	CAR SALES REGISTERED	VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
Aug '25	7,892	8,088	-196	261	258
Sep '25	9,729	10,352	-623	345	263
Oct '25	9,351	10,708	-1,357	345	267
Nov '25	8,226	10,223	-1,997	341	270
Dec '25	8,889	6,376	2,513	206	268
Jan '26	6,427	9,003	-2,576	290	271
Feb '26	6,781	7,137	-356	255	271
Mar '26	8,525	10,035	-1,510	324	276
Apr '26	6,857	7,103	-246	237	278
May '26	8,113	8,158	-45	263	282
Jun '26	9,300	9,938	-638	331	287
Jul '26	13,136	8,713	4,423	281	290
Aug '26	**8,692**	**9,137**	**-445**	**295**	**293**
Year to date	67,831	69,224			
Change on last month	-33.8%	4.9%			
Change on Aug 2025	**10.1%**	**13.0%**			
	MORE IMPORTED	MORE SOLD			

Imports vs sales – used passenger vehicles

	CAR SALES IMPORTED	CAR SALES REGISTERED	VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
Aug '25	5,108	7,465	-2,357	241	235
Sep '25	5,666	7,061	-1,395	235	235
Oct '25	5,422	7,001	-1,579	226	234
Nov '25	5,657	6,778	-1,121	226	234
Dec '25	6,727	6,694	33	216	233
Jan '26	5,136	7,594	-2,458	245	233
Feb '26	6,059	6,948	-889	248	234
Mar '26	7,353	8,224	-871	265	236
Apr '26	10,487	6,781	3,706	226	237
May '26	7,801	7,162	639	231	237
Jun '26	9,527	7,563	1,964	252	239
Jul '26	10,582	8,079	2,503	261	239
Aug '26	**6,746**	**8,156**	**-1,410**	**263**	**241**
Year to date	63,691	60,507			
Change on last month	-36.3%	1.0%			
Change on Aug 2025	**32.1%**	**9.3%**			
	MORE IMPORTED	MORE SOLD			

risks and evolving consumer expectations.

With the latest criteria for 2026-28 now in effect, the iX3 was the first model to go through the new "stages of safety" approach.

These include safe driving, which covers how well the vehicle supports the driver and provides a safer experience, and crash avoidance.

Then there's crash protection, which tackles how well the vehicle's structure, airbags and seatbelts protect occupants and other road users.

The fourth stage is post-crash with the car's design being assessed and how on-board systems can assist emergency responders improve occupant care after a collision.

Carla Hoorweg, ANCAP's chief executive, says: "We've again stepped up our assessment to capture and evaluate the many ways a modern car can protect its occupants and road users.

"The iX3's specification and performance have captured the essence of the new requirements.

"This approach retains all the traditional crash tests ANCAP is synonymous with.

"Building on this, our 2026 requirements encourage even better protection for a broader range of occupants through restraint systems and vehicle designs that cater for people of different body types and sizes.

"Fuel leakage and EV battery integrity are now reviewed, which is particularly relevant given the increasing number of EVs now on our roads.

"Another new area of focus is e-call, which is an automatic crash function that notifies emergency services of a crash and its location."

FRANCHISES BEING SOLD

Eagers Automotive is looking to sell its franchised businesses in New Zealand to Armstrong's Motor Group with the deal expected to be settled in the fourth quarter of this year.

In addition, the Queensland-based company will retain and grow easyauto123, its used-vehicle operation in this country.

In Auckland, Eagers has North Harbour Ford and North Harbour Mazda on the North Shore and John Andrew Ford & Mazda in Grey Lynn. In Manukau, its franchises include Nissan, Hyundai, Isuzu, GMSV, MG, Nissan and Suzuki. It also has a servicing centre with Davie Holden and a trade parts operation.

Eagers describes the status of the potential deal with Armstrong's as "entry into a non-binding term sheet".

It adds it will retain the easyauto123 operation in New Zealand, which will enable "the allocation of capital to other strategic growth initiatives".

The used-car business, which it's looking to expand, already has two branches in Auckland and one in Christchurch.

Typhoons impact

Some 8,692 new cars crossed the border in August. The year-to-date total now stands at 67,831. There were 4,017 units imported from Japan, 1,983 from China, 1,147 from South Korea, 692 from Thailand and 220 from Belgium.

There were 1,956 new commercials imported last month to take 2026's total to 19,270 with 1,270 units coming in from Thailand. Next up were Japan with 306 and Belgium on 84.

The Motor Industry Association reports August's results should be interpreted with caution as typhoon-related disruption to shipping schedules from Asia delayed some departures and pushed several arrivals into the final days of the month.

Chief executive Aimee Wiley says: "That's likely to have influenced registration volumes across parts of the market, making individual brand and model movements less representative than usual.

"Passenger registrations continued to strengthen, increasingly supported by battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids, while commercial activity remained subdued."

Imports vs sales – new commercials

	CAR SALES IMPORTED	CAR SALES REGISTERED	VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
Aug '25	2,449	2,792	-343	90	106
Sep '25	2,523	3,487	-964	116	105
Oct '25	2,403	2,738	-335	88	104
Nov '25	1,292	3,426	-2,134	114	103
Dec '25	2,338	3,600	-1,262	116	103
Jan '26	2,360	4,020	-1,660	130	106
Feb '26	2,074	3,627	-1,553	130	107
Mar '26	3,135	3,621	-486	117	108
Apr '26	1,901	3,498	-1,597	117	109
May '26	1,860	3,346	-1,486	108	110
Jun '26	2,229	2,875	-646	96	109
Jul '26	3,755	2,762	993	89	109
Aug '26	**1,956**	**3,052**	**-1,096**	**98**	**110**
Year to date	19,270	26,801			
Change on last month	-47.9%	10.5%			
Change on Aug 2025	**-20.1%**	**9.3%**			
	LESS IMPORTED	MORE SOLD			

Imports vs sales – used commercials

	CAR SALES IMPORTED	CAR SALES REGISTERED	VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
Aug '25	296	365	-69	12	15
Sep '25	270	399	-129	13	15
Oct '25	325	315	10	10	14
Nov '25	262	290	-28	10	13
Dec '25	330	274	56	9	13
Jan '26	189	333	-144	11	13
Feb '26	252	345	-93	12	12
Mar '26	365	383	-18	12	12
Apr '26	380	380	0	13	12
May '26	175	366	-191	12	12
Jun '26	251	339	-88	11	11
Jul '26	437	389	48	13	11
Aug '26	**289**	**353**	**-64**	**11**	**11**
Year to date	2,338	2,888			
Change on last month	-33.9%	-9.3%			
Change on Aug 2025	**-2.4%**	**-3.3%**			
	LESS IMPORTED	LESS SOLD			